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RAMSEY BENSON

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MELCHISEDEC

BY
RAMSEY BENSON
AUTHOR OF "A LORD OF LANDS."



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MELCHISEDEC

"Called of God a high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

—PAUL, TO THE HEBREWS.

"It isn't notions sets people doing the right things—it's feelings."

—ADAM BEDE.

BOOK I
S H A C K

CHAPTER I

CHAFF WHICH THE WIND DRIVETH AWAY

SHACK had the right, perhaps doubly the right, to quarter his arms with the blazon of royalty. Moreover, it was a right which you hadn't to go groping away back in the dark ages to confirm. If you mounted up only as far as Shack's great-grandfather, you came upon a king. True, this great personage was a red Indian, chief over the mere remnant of a tribe never very important, and by that a lesser figure in history than a Plantagenet; yet royalty is royalty, unaffected in its essence by the ups and downs of fortune. How was it with the seventeenth Louis? He had no nation but by courtesy, no crown, no throne, nay, not even so much as a fresh shirt for his majesty's back, and still he was concededly royal. Shack's great-grandfather's dominions were only a few acres of wild swamp, his people only a few score of dejected souls, and his sway entirely subject to the will of the Great Father at Washington—so much was undeniable; but withal there is many a boast of heraldry no valider than the blazonry aforesaid.

This king's daughter was Shack's grandmother, and that raises another question. By ordinary usages, she was a princess of the blood, but by Indian usages

there are no princesses, poets to the contrary notwithstanding. The daughter of a chief is no better than the daughter of anybody else. She inherits her mother's estate, or a lesser, for whereas the mother has the distinction of being a great man's beast of burden, the daughter may become the drudge of the most ordinary buck in the tribe. She is a chattel anyway and gets no more consideration for being the chief's than if she were his pony,—probably not so much, since a pony can carry more load than a woman. However, the descent is not justly to be impugned. Feudal jurisconsults held that a child took no more from its mother than a bird from its nest, but their doctrine was long since exploded; and had Shack chosen to claim his title, the fact that he derived through the female line was no serious difficulty—greater difficulties are being surmounted by heraldry every day. He might never be king, perhaps, but the tinge of the purple was his nevertheless.

Who his grandfather was, no history saith. The princess (to speak out of the Indian manner) was never married,—it was the occasion of considerable chattering among the women when their quick and watchful eyes caught the shadow which the coming event could not be kept from casting; and when, one bleak autumn day, being then on their way back to the reservation to spend the winter, they had to halt a few hours while another soul was added to their numbers by the travail of the chief's unwed daughter, some joking was called forth, of the saturnine, Indian sort. But on the whole nobody minded much until the word went round that the new arrival, a girl by the way, was of mixed parentage. This imported an element of novelty, and there was a buzz of gossip.

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The princess, too, as if her purpose were to stimulate curiosity and draw to her affair more than its rightful share of attention, was mum as any oyster. There was a good deal of guessing as to Shack's grandfather, first and last.

They reached the reservation shortly, whereupon the young mother hastened to the Catholic priest who had his rude altar hard by, and gave the child to be baptized in the faith and christened Marie. Of course that meant only one thing, namely, that its father was a Frenchman. At that time Frenchmen were commoner than any other variety of the paleface, their gallantry was proverbial, and there was scarcely a tribe which hadn't its halfbreeds who could boast themselves of the race of St. Louis. But with all their guessing the women could never quite make out what particular Frenchman this particular Frenchman had been; it was a fruitless quest and therefore tiresome, and before long they gave it up. The princess fostered a certain negative interest in the business by bestowing more care on her baby than was customary, but in less than a year she died of quick consumption, and that closed the incident, as far as the women were concerned. It was only an incident, anyway.

Marie grew up a member of the king's household. That is to say, it was his lodge which she sneaked into, all uninvited and barely tolerated, at night; and it was food of his providing which she fought for, getting much or little as fortune favored her. No especial consideration at the hands of her relatives distinguished her from other little girls; like them and along with them, she grew up as best she might, in the way of some wild thing. Those Indians were not yet weaned from their nomadic habit,—nothing could in-

duce them to stay on the reservation in summer. With the first whiff of spring, sometimes while yet snow lay on the ground and the air was sharp with frost, they would flee to their beloved wilds and the precarious freedom there awaiting them, and as likely as not nothing more would be seen of them till the blizzards of the late fall drove them back. Marie went along, to take her chances with the rest, to revel and waste when game was plentiful, to starve when it failed. In her attitude toward the advantages of civilization, she was as much an Indian as any of them. She never set foot in the school, at the reservation, though the teachers tried their best to catch her. They thought her romantically beautiful, and comely she certainly was. The French had softened the color of her hair and put a very fetching kink in it besides, and had made plump her cheeks till the bones thereof were respectably covered; and she retained enough of the Indian to be lithe and graceful.

The priest of the mission took an interest in her, too, and cultivated her as much as she would let him. On the whole, he made out rather better than the teachers, for Marie discovered some religious feeling, or what might easily pass for such in the sanguine eyes of the father. It was naturally so,—most all Indians have a religious feeling, in their vague, heathen fashion, and as for the other part of her, everybody knows how pious French are apt to be, especially their womenkind. But Marie was peculiar about it, very. She gave every evidence of loving the priest and reverencing his holy office. If she met him anywhere, no matter where, be the ground dry or muddy, she would drop on her knees and kiss his hand; and that, too, though he forbade her, and told her

plainly that she was not to kneel in that fashion to any man less than a bishop. But Marie would have her way, notwithstanding entreaty or command to the contrary. She went to her duties with an eagerness almost frantic, yet very irregularly, and utterly regardless of the law. The priest instructed her over and over in the Easter obligation, and solemnly warned her that if she did not receive the body of Christ at least once between Sexagesima and Pentecost, she thereby put herself out of communion with the saints. Marie cried out in terror at the awful suggestion—and went to her duties as the fancy took her. Sometimes she would present herself to be shrived three or four times a week. Sometimes she would confess and stay away from the communion. Sometimes she would approach the altar, kneel a moment, and jump up and hurry out without receiving the host. Sometimes she would repair to the chapel all living alone, and the priest would find her there, bowed down and weeping as if her heart were breaking; but when, on such occasion, he tenderly asked her what troubled her, she answered nothing, and looked up at him in unfeigned wonder.

The priest and the teachers were beginning to ask, in much anxiety, what was to become of Marie, when she settled the doubt, all without notice, and with characteristic waywardness, by going to live with a rough old cruiser,—a Scotchman whose name was none other than Robert Bruce. And just here is where the possibility of a further right to that royal quartering came in,—the seed of the illustrious king whom the spider put new heart into has been known to spring up in more unexpected places; but whether or no, Bruce was at all events signally possessed of the unlovable traits of that monarch's race,—was a veri-

table Caledonian bear, in short. He shocked the priest and the teachers immensely, and it was sickening to think of Marie going to him. He was past forty and the girl not yet fifteen, and in every respect there was equal or greater disparity,—they were the hawk mating with the dove. Any heart, unless an Indian's, or a Scotchman's, must revolt out of sheer sympathy, at such a tender flower of the forest being plucked by so ruthless a hand. And yet, what else? Marie was a woman and had to go to some man; Bruce was at worst as good as a redskin would be, and between Bruce and some redskin her choice lay. The priest saw the necessity, and would make the best of it; he bravely essayed to get Bruce baptized in order that there might be a marriage sanctified by the rites of the Church. But that enterprise turned about as you might expect,—the fellow chose to deem himself insulted by the proposal that he become a Papist. In point of fact he was an unbelieving pagan, a thorough atheist, except in controversy; there no Covenanter ever defended the faith of his fathers more hotly. He flouted the priest, mocked at his mummeries, and the next they knew, Marie had been rapt off to his cabin without any ceremony whatever. The most pathetic part of it was her willingness, as if she foresaw all the tragedy of her fate yet knew it was her fate none the less. All too plainly she had no love for Bruce, not even a tolerable liking. She shuddered at his approach and beheld him with terror in her eyes, like a fluttering bird which a serpent has charmed.

Shack was her son, her first-born and only child. The day he was ushered into this vale of tears, Bruce chanced to be in a frolicsome mood,—not a common

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thing, for it was much more like him to be surly and fractious. He had been made aware of Marie's royal lineage, how that her grandfather had been chief of the tribe, and he was minded to have his joke out of it. The Indian law was, when a son was born to the chief, for that eminent individual, the moment he heard the first wail of his offspring, to go forth from the lodge, and the first object he was made conscious of, outside, determined the youngster's name. Sitting Bull was named that way. His father went forth, after the fashion laid down, and beheld a bison sitting on its haunches,—a most extraordinary posture for a bison, but then Sitting Bull turned out an extraordinary Indian. So likewise Rain-in-the-Face, who slew Custer and drank his blood. This redoubtable warrior was born at dead of night, and when his father went forth he could see nothing; but a misty rain was falling, and he felt it in his face—hence the name. Bruce's conceit was to carry out the tradition. He went forth, chuckling hideously to himself, and came back in a moment and named the infant Limping Bluejay.

Marie had other views. She feared her violent, peppery man, and chose to keep her own counsel; but in the night, while Bruce slept, she rose from her bed, and with her day-old baby in her arms made her way to the reservation. Indian women were used to get up within a few hours after confinement, and never the worse for it; but Marie was less an Indian than she had perhaps imagined. The long walk through the woods, with swamps to wade and fallen trees to climb over, was too much,—it finished her, in fact. The priest found her lying at the door of his chapel when he went to say low mass in the morning.

She was conscious still, and knew him, and kissed his hand, as of old. She gave him the child to be baptized, and that done, she died.

They christened him Jacques. But most everybody called him Shack. When the English tongue said Jacques, it sounded like Shack.

He was born waif and stray. His father took no trouble about him, absolutely none. Bruce was notified of Marie's death,—the priest himself went out to the cruiser's cabin and had a stormy interview; but nothing came of it. He was asked what he wished done with the child, and his reply was that he didn't care in the least about the brat. The agent at the reservation proposed recourse to the civil law, but before the first steps could be taken by leaden-heeled justice, the crafty cruiser vanished, and was seen no more in those parts. Shack never had the least benefit of his father, yet his orphanage was not without its compensations. Bruce's evasion of his duties threw the child back on the tribe, and that was to the child's advantage as regards material welfare, anyway. If he was neglected, neglect was the common lot of all the babies, and he could manage as they did. The better part of the business was that he escaped being abused. If he unhappily got in the way he was likely to be kicked out of it, but he wasn't followed up and beaten. If he went cold and hungry often, that was the Indian way, the Indian choice. Neither he nor any other of his race need do without the ordinary creature comforts,—they were all wards of the nation and they had a home at the reservation whenever they chose to claim it. What Shack must have suffered had Bruce departed from the fashion of his kind and lived up to his domestic obligations to the extent of

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standing by the family he was responsible for,—well, speculation on that head were idle, but it is safe to say that luck was with the boy when he was left fatherless. “Good riddance of bad rubbish!” the agent remarked, and it was justly put.

Shack had his especial friends, and they were worth having. The priest would never forget him, or tire of laboring for his soul, and that meant many a little favor even though his laboring went for nothing. The teachers knew about him, too, and set out to inveigle him into the primrose paths of learning, as they or their predecessors had done with his mother before him; and that meant more little favors. Marie herself had not been more baffling,—in much he was like her, though not so handsome, or so vivacious, or so robust. He had her hair, shot with a touch of the Scotch red and none the worse for that; but his face, where hers had been glowing and plump, was sallow and lean; and his figure, where hers was the picture of alert, vigorous health, was stooped and rickety. Still there was a beauty about him, especially in his truly wonderful eyes, big and brown and full of a smouldering fire. The teachers were convinced that there was a soul behind those eyes, but do what they would they never could reach it. Shack would tolerate them when they came bearing suitable gifts, but he wouldn't listen to their lessons; and it was likewise with the advances of the priest. He was dumb enough at any time, but peculiarly so when the appeal was to his religious nature.

So he grew up, to the age of sixteen or seventeen,—a slender, frail creature, belonging to no race, a being like none other, a soul apart and having no kind. In summer he wandered over the hunting-grounds

with his tribe, though never hunting himself,—he was neither buck nor squaw, but spent his time hovering idly about the lodges or on lonely excursions none knew or cared whither. In winter he resorted among the lumberjacks, in the pineries. There was an indecision upon him, as if he knew not where he belonged, whether with the savagery whence he was sprung or with the civilization whose outposts were the lumber-camps. In the spring, when the waters filled the streams, and the log-drives were getting off, he would watch them, he would even follow them, with a longing in his face. Once he was prevailed upon by the good-natured men to accompany them as far as the first settlement, but there their good-nature took form in making him tipsy and he fled in a fright back to the tribe.

He was known far and wide among the lumberjacks. He was a famous jumper. There were other jumpers, but Shack was best of all.

What is a jumper, do you ask?

Briefly, a person touched with some nervous malady, whereby, if you came up to him stealthily, and laid a hand upon him unawares, he would very likely jump prodigiously, and turn livid, and yell as in agony. The lumberjacks enjoyed nothing, perhaps, more than making a jumper jump, and they were never tired of putting Shack through his paces. And yet, though he was superlatively good at it, he had his weak point,—you couldn't absolutely rely on him. At times he wouldn't jump,—nothing could make him jump; no matter what you did to him, he was cool as a cucumber. Some thought it depended on the phases of the moon.

Another singularity about him was his vagrant way

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of drifting about from camp to camp. Now he would spend a whole winter at one camp, and now he would divide the season among a dozen or more, making long journeys through the trackless forest, regardless of wind and weather, at a speed marvelous to think of. That was the Indian of him. There is something almost uncanny, almost suggestive of supernatural connections, in the flitting of an Indian, like a dry leaf before a gale, here to-day and there to-morrow, with incredible distances between. Shack would put in his appearance in the most approved style of unexpectedness, it might be day or it might be night,—often the teamsters, the first men out, would find him curled up with the cattle. They were always glad to see him, and gave him hearty welcome. It gets pretty dull about a lumber-camp, and a new face is a god-send, not to mention the jumping, and the fun to be got out of that.

You are not to believe lumberjacks uncommonly cruel,—if you take them below the bark they are uncommonly otherwise. But their position is peculiar. They are near to a somber nature, for nothing can be somberer than a pine forest in winter. Their hours are long and solitary, with much night and little day, and that little lessened by the towering, gloomy trees. You have no conception of the dullness which gets to brood there, or you will find some apology for the diversion-hunger which possesses the men, even where, as often happens, it becomes quite desperate. If starving castaways will greedily devour offal, is it any wonder that lumberjacks do things for fun which we call horrible? We can hardly call them less, those torments which the lumberjacks put upon Shack, the helpless, frail boy. How could they do it, with the

very look of him an appeal for pity? Because of the deadly dullness,—that's all. Because they were dull, they made him the butt of all manner of rough horse-play, and when they saw it hurt him, they were all the more pleased, thought it all the more fun. Shack was sensitive, no doubting that,—more likely a French trait than Scotch. Certainly it wasn't Indian. An Indian is the most finished of stoics.

He had imagination, and that was how they came to tell him so many distressful stories. He was open to every sort of vague suggestion,—they had no need to be explicit,—if they so much as hinted at the possibility of some spirit of evil dwelling in a crooked tree, say, or in the airhole where the water bubbled up in the coldest weather, it was enough; Shack did the rest and saw the fearsome thing with creeping flesh. A certain McGraw, who came up into the woods winter after winter, knew from his old grandmother in Ireland endless legends of spooks and goblins,—he could many a dreadful tale unfold, and it was rare sport, they all considered, to see Shack stand with dropped jaw, and starting eyes, and stiffening hair. Especially the eyes. Nobody ever saw eyes like Shack's, when he was under strong emotion. It was a curious fact that the boy would go from camp to camp till he found McGraw, and there stay, perhaps during the rest of the winter.

Once upon a time somebody, keener for fun, perhaps, or more ingenious, hit upon the felicitous expedient of fixing up a ghost, to scare Shack.

It was easily managed. The men worked in the bush, of an afternoon, as long as they could see, and made their way back to camp after nightfall. Shack did not always go into the bush, but sometimes he did,

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and they selected one of these times, when the moon was about right, as they estimated, and had the ghost meet him at a lonesome bend in the path. Two or three who were in the plot had come along with him, and they professed to be terrified beyond measure, to help out the illusion, while the ghost did his part by groaning dismally and gliding about on unbending legs.

But the play fell pretty flat, after all.

Not because Shack was skeptical, though,—probably his imagination never worked more favorably than on that occasion. He wasn't scared,—that was the long and short of it. Instead of recoiling, as one in terror might, or being rooted to the spot, or anything like that, he sprang forward, eagerly, as if a ghost were the very thing he had been wishing most to meet with.

And then, too, where a man is downright frightened, you expect him to be speechless, or at all events to have difficulty with his utterance. Shack wasn't speechless at all,—didn't even stammer.

"Are you a dead man?" he asked, straightforwardly.

The ghost made answer, in a sufficiently hollow, creepy voice, that he was.

"You were buried?"

"Ah, yes!" this with a telling sob.

"Did you come out before the ground froze?"

They weren't looking for such questions. The ghost knew not what to say, and hesitated; and his hesitation was his undoing. For now Shack came near enough to lay a hand upon the very material white blanket, and the fleshly limbs underneath, and knew he was being deceived. What then? Nothing

out of him but a low, inarticulate cry, as of disappointment, and with that he shot away into the woods and the thick night, to be seen no more at that camp.

He was not an able hand, but he found his uses, apart from the fun he furnished. He more than earned his keep; what he ate was a trifle anyway, for he was none of your hearty feeders, while as for lodgings he asked not so much as a bunk,—only a place on the floor by the fire. If they had a blanket to spare him, well and good, he would take it and wrap himself in it; but if they had none he was content to lie down without cover of any description. He wasn't brought up to be fastidious.

He had been known to prove himself an extremely handy man in a pinch. He shunned the heavy work, such as swinging the ax, or dragging the great saw,—he was much too delicate for such sustained effort; but he could rally a nervous strength against an emergency which was extraordinary. And he was not altogether a tender plant, as they found out the day old Dan Beeman had his feet frozen off. That was an awful day, remembered yet by many an old-timer. Story went that the glass fell to sixty degrees below zero, or ninety degrees below freezing. They had no glass at the camp, but at Cantilever, fifteen miles off, there was record of sixty below. You and I have no notion of such cold as that.

Their hauling team was four splendid great bay oxen, prize animals all of them, quick on their feet, steady as a clock, and true blue to the bitter end. The regular driver got up and fed them as usual, sniffed the air going and coming, ate his breakfast and made plump announcement that it was too cold for him. He wouldn't stir a foot from the camp, though old

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Dan, who was boss, cursed and stormed and called him all kinds of a baby. Only for Shack there would have been no logging,—he was at hand and offered to drive. He was good at driving, too, when you take into consideration how averse the average ox is to an Indian.

Cold? Say!

You know the way the runners of a heavy sled will shriek over a frosty road,—the frostier the road, the more the runners shriek. Well, when they started off the first load of logs that morning, the men at the landing, five miles away, heard the runners shrieking. That was partly a testimony to the clearness of the air, but more was it a testimony to the cold. The men took it as such, and debated seriously whether they were quite safe to keep on working.

The hauling went on prosperously, however, until the gang at the skidways, becoming more and more alarmed for themselves, at length built a roaring fire of the slashings. When Shack came back after his second load, he swung his cattle round within ten feet of the fire. The oxen felt the heat, and came to a halt; it was something too good, under the circumstances, to pass by.

“Whup—whup!” Shack sang out to them, and touched them with the goad to bring them round, but for once in their lives they were disobedient, and only huddled up closer to the fire, until you could smell their hair singeing.

Old Dan was a fractious fellow at best, and things had been going more or less against his grain all day. When the cattle balked, it was the last straw,—he flew into a fury and was beside himself. He roared at the men, commanding them to put out the fire, calling

them babies and cursing to curdle your blood, and then, when their only response was to pile on more fuel (you understand that a boss in the woods is boss in a limited sense and has considerably less authority than the Czar of Russia) he snatched up a cart-stake, swung it with all his might (he was a powerful specimen), and brought it down full force on the head of the off ox in front. The patient, trustful beast, looking for nothing but kindness from the men he so loyally served, made no movement to avoid the blow, —it caught him on the horn, and the horn was broken off clean at the skull. The shock made him stagger and groan, and in a moment the red blood gushed out and drenched him.

A sickening spectacle! Half a dozen voices broke out all at once, in horror and protest. Even old Dan himself was sobered, and looked sorry for what he had done. But Shack was made frantic. He jabbered, in Indian, like a madman. He danced and wrung his hands, he rushed up to the ox, and clasped his arms about the creature's neck, and clung there, wailing and whimpering, and the blood ran over him till he too was drenched and red with it. That made the spectacle all the more sickening, too sickening even for lumberjacks to stand,—one of the men stepped forward and laid hand on the boy, to draw him away. At the touch Shack jumped, and screamed, and fled into the woods. But his jumping elicited no laughter, that time,—it wasn't a bit funny. The dumb ox swaying his mutilated head back and forth in testimony to his pain, that was alone enough to put an end to laughing, and there was moreover the thought of the poorly clothed lad making off so, with the cold what it was. They would have stopped him, but he was away be-

fore they realized he was going. They believed he had gone to his certain death,—they had seen the last of Shack. Yet it wasn't long till they heard of him at another camp, about twenty miles away, apparently none the worse. So they had a laugh out of it, after all, quoting the old saying to the effect that an Indian is all face and can't be frozen.

Sixty degrees below is nothing to trifle with. Old Dan was for going on with the logging and turned in to drive the cattle himself, but the men wouldn't stay by him. They were sore and disgruntled over what had happened, but more than that they feared the terrible cold, and so they struck, and went back to the camp, and hovered about the stove. Old Dan's bile was moved afresh by their mutiny, and he raved and railed, but all to no purpose. It suited his mood to stay out, himself, and he went storming down to the landing, and put in the day there, pottering about all by himself. But towards night he came in, with his crest fallen. His feet were frozen hard as two stones, and he never stood on them again. Coal-oil was the common remedy for frostbite, and old Dan sat till morning with his feet plunged in a bucket of it; but they were not to be saved. He was packed down river to a hospital, and the surgeons took his feet both off, and told him he was lucky to keep his life.

The last the lumberjacks saw of Shack was at Bradish's camp, in the Deer Lake country. Bradish was a pious man,—as pious as a lumber-baron could well be and retain his barony. You know about how that is. He was the owner in fee or leasehold of only two forties thereabouts, and a million of logs was a big yield for a forty. Yet for twelve successive win-

ters he sent in a hundred men, who never logged less than six millions a season. You see the point. Twelve winters, a hundred men, and only two forties of his own,—Bradish wasn't too pious for that; but at the same time, he wouldn't suffer a tap of work to be done on Sunday, and he always had a thought for his men's souls. The men, on their part, understood Bradish, and when there came along one day a tramping evangelist, in mackinaw and packs, with a real tussock slung over his back (he had a fancy to be a lumberjack to lumberjacks, you perceive) and bringing a line from headquarters asking that he be shown every courtesy, they were in no doubt as to what was expected of them. They were to give the sky-pilot the best in the shop, and listen to his harangues till he got tired and moved on. And they were not averse. Once more a new face was a new face, and even a sermon could sound good, in virtue of its freshness, where every man had long since heard all the shady stories the camp could muster.

They laid themselves out, in fact. The evangelist had a wish to hold a meeting in the open air, with no roof but the sky, and no walls but the whispering pines, and they managed the business for him; built a great fire which threw its light far down the aisles of the forest, and stood about and listened to his message, respectfully, if not responsively. A strange and striking picture they made, with their hundred faces showing in the fitful light, now bright, now dull. The picture, the weird solemnity of it, may well have been what affected Shack, and prompted him to do what he did. It was a new thing for him to manifest an interest in religion. But if the fathers at the mission had labored in vain with him, that might have been for

the lack of some such touch as was afforded here and now,—the brooding presence of the nature which was all the mother he had known. At all events, for whatsoever reason or no reason at all, he was interested. The men were always expecting him to do something amusing, and there was a rustling about the fire, and a faint softening of the hundred faces when he was seen to push himself forward and take his stand at length so near that he was fairly looking down the evangelist's throat, in the attitude of rapt attention. But that wasn't all. After a little he broke in on the discourse, with an abrupt question.

"Who is this God?" he said.

The evangelist flushed resentfully,—it sounded so like some scoffer's interruption; but when he saw the boy, and the earnestness in the upturned face, he was moved to answer indulgently.

"The Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and of earth," he said, and bowed reverently.

That wasn't enough for Shack, however. "I don't know what you mean," he said, and there was a strange note of urgency, almost of impatience, in his manner.

"You know what a father is?"

"Father James, at the mission?"

"No, no! Your own father. Have you no father?"

"I have nothing. I had a dog, but he chased a wolf and the wolf killed him. That is all I have."

The hundred faces smiled broadly, but the evangelist was not offended,—he perceived what sort of a person he had to deal with, how very simple and unschooled.

"Listen, my boy," he said, kindly. "God is great."

"Like the tree," said Shack, pointing to the Norway which towered above them.

"Greater. He made the tree."

"Like the lake."

"Greater yet. He made the lake, also."

"Like the sun."

"He is greater even than the sun, for he made the sun likewise. He is greater and different. God is a spirit, my boy. We cannot see him except by his works, or hear him, or feel him."

"How do you know about him; then?"

"By His Word!" and the evangelist held up his Bible.

The end of the incident was quite the most surprising part of it. The men were less surprised than the evangelist, but even they were not looking for anything like that which happened. For now, all at once, with the quickness of a wildcat, Shack snatched the book out of the sky-pilot's uplifted hand and bounded into the bush, out of sight.

It was a little while before anybody moved or spoke, so taken aback were they all. Then the men snickered, and the evangelist found his voice to request, not without asperity, that somebody recover his property for him,—it was the Bible he had carried with him for years and by its associations it was very dear; he would gladly give another and a better in its place, but he must have that particular Bible back. The men shook their heads, however; none of them could hope to overtake the fleet child of the forest. In vain the evangelist argued that Shack was lurking somewhere near, that such a mere boy would never dare go far into the forest alone at night; the men knew better.

CHAPTER II

BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON

A LITTLE country school, and the class in the Third Reader up. Perhaps you know about the class in the Third Reader, in a very little country school, in a very little hut of a house, taught by a very little young woman who is not so sure of her call but she will stop now and then to scan the horizon for a cloud the size of a man's hand?

A shocky boy begins the reading, slowly and heavily. He sticks often, and as often as he sticks, he will back up, like a snowplow in a drift, to gather headway, and have at it again with fresh energy.

Thus:

“Littlebylit—tlethebird — thebirdbuildsher—nest—
littlebylit—tlebylittlethe — sun—sinks—to—restlittle-
bylit—tlethewaves — in — their — wavesintheirglee-
smoothe — the — rough — rocks — roughrocksby —
theshore—of—the—thesea.”

Follows a girl, with pig-tailed hair, briskly, with the air of showing the boy, and all the world, how:

“Littlebylittlethebirdbuildshernestlittlebylittlethesun
sinkstorestlittleby littlethe wavesin theirgleesmoothethe
roughrocksbytheshoreofthesea.”

And so forth and so on, until the waves in their glee have smoothed the rough rocks by the shore of the

sea a matter of half a dozen times, in as many various tones and manners.

Scattered about in the rude forms are a number of other boys and girls, the eldest nearly grown, the youngest only fairly begun to grow. Some are poring doggedly, others are dreaming with their eyes open, and one small lad has gone frankly to sleep, with his head lying on his slate. To tell the truth, everybody is more or less sleepy. Even the teacher, though it is her bounden duty to be alert, yawns and nods in spite of herself. There is a hot fire in the little stove, and the little room is like an oven. The face of the sleeping lad glistens with sweat.

The teacher sits with her back to the door, but the children face it, and they waken first. There has been no sound, not a footfall, or the creak of a hinge, yet all at once the children are broad awake, staring astonished and breathless. The bird has built her nest once more, little by little, but the sun is left in midair, while the class in the Third Reader give themselves up to their surprise. Surprise lays hold of every heart. The sleeping boy, though nobody touches him, or speaks to him, starts up. The teacher catches the infection, and starts up too, and faces about.

A man, or a big boy, stood in the doorway,—and he was Shack. They did not know who he was or they would have been even more amazed, for had he not come all of a hundred and fifty miles, on foot, in the dead of winter, without provision and not much better than half clothed? But they perceived that he was a stranger, and a strange figure, who had come strangely in among them, without a footfall or a creak of warning; and by that they were amazed enough.

He was like a specter, especially as he did not speak,

but regarded them dumbly, out of his strange dark eyes. There was something uncanny about the whole affair, and the teacher was frightened. The children could see that she was frightened, and they promptly took fright from her, and huddled back among the benches. Of course it lay upon her to do something, and she rose to the situation, after a fashion.

"Good-day, sir!" she said, with a quaver, and forcing a poor smile.

Shack glowered at her, with his deep, smouldering eyes. "Can I learn to read here?" he demanded, almost fiercely.

"Oh, yes, to be sure!" the little teacher answered, a trifle relieved by the swift reflection that cutthroats and robbers didn't usually begin that way.

"In this book?" and Shack pulled the sky-pilot's Bible out of his pocket, and showed it to her, jealously, without letting go of it.

"In any book," she answered. "Have you never been to school?"

Never.

"Do you know your letters?"

He didn't even know what letters were.

"A, B, C,—and so on!"

And so on? No, that was all strange to him.

"Well, won't you please sit down?" The little teacher could think of nothing better to propose. Though he certainly didn't act just like a cutthroat or a robber, she couldn't help trembling a good deal, and turning very white, it was all so unusual and unexpected.

She set out her own chair for him, but he didn't see it, or else he didn't fancy sitting of that kind, choosing rather to squat down against the wall, on his heels, like

an Indian. He didn't take off his hat—who had ever taught him to uncover, in the house, or in the presence of a lady? The teacher felt all the time that she had to do something besides huddle back with the children, though that was what she would best like to do,—she had to take the situation in hand; so she came with a book—a primer—and gave it to Shack open, and stood beside him quaking and pointed out the big letters. He on his part fixed his eyes intently on the page, as if he would burn a hole through the paper with his glance, yet your very first guess would be, looking at him, that he saw nothing consciously. That was uncanny, too,—it suggested lunacy. What if the strange man were a lunatic?

It was a mighty hard position for a little young woman, but it couldn't last. She had taken measures almost at once,—had whispered stealthily to her most dependable boy, to go for help; and the boy, his feet winged with terror, had gone. His departure was attended with some little confusion, but Shack didn't look up from his letters. He didn't look up when the boy returned, either, though he brought a brawny, thick-whiskered farmer with him, who stamped in abruptly, making much noise. It seemed an age before deliverance came, with that terrifying figure squat against the wall, motionless,—that was about the worst, his sitting there so still, as if he weren't flesh and blood at all; yet it came at last. The farmer was astonished, but not at all frightened. He went boldly up and laid his hand on Shack's shoulder, in no gentle fashion.

“Now, then!” he said, brusquely.

The wayfarer had journeyed far, over poor roads, with food and shelter uncertainly vouchsafed,—that

accounted for much. Perhaps the phases of the moon were just right, to account for still more. At all events what followed would have diverted the lumber-jacks hugely,—Shack sprang into the air, and yelled and turned livid, and, by way of finishing touch, to fill out the largest measure of entertainment, fell foaming and insensible. That was something quite new. He had never been known to lose consciousness before.

Of course the teacher screeched, and the children with her. Even the sturdy farmer was startled and disturbed, and scarce knew what to do. You can imagine the scene, the strange incident culminating in so superlatively strange a manner,—not a person there would forget it to his or her dying day. But in a moment the farmer bethought himself to send boys scurrying for more help, and especially for a wagon; and the little teacher, moved by the compassion which is stronger even than fear in the breast of woman, came forward anxiously and proposed that they go for Dr. Robert (pronounced Rowbear, because the doctor was a Frenchman proud of his race). She had the presence of mind, too, to bathe Shack's face in cold water, and only drew back when he opened his dark eyes and looked up at her rather wildly. However, his opening his eyes made him out to be in no very bad way,—only dazed and stupid, as if he had been struck a heavy blow; and there was really no occasion for bathing his face any more. He made no effort to rise, and when the wagon came, and they loaded him into it, he offered no resistance, but listlessly suffered them to do with him as they would. They were a bit rough,—you know how it is with men, even when they mean kindly; and two or three times, as she stood by, looking on, the teacher exclaimed, “Oh, oh!” and wrung

her hands a little, and seemed about ready to cry. Shack's Bible had dropped out of his pocket, and they were driving off, when she came running after them, with the book in her hand. Her compassion was very much in evidence,—she was very sorry for him, for all the fright he had given her. He took the Bible from her without a word, absently, as if his wits were not fully recovered, or else he didn't care any more.

They conveyed him to their poor-farm. That was the only place, except the county jail. They might have put him in jail, since he was a vagrant, with the proofs of his vagrancy upon him, but there was more to be considered. An inmate of the jail was a sheer charge on the public funds, whereas an inmate of the poor-farm might be got to work and pay some portion, if not all, of his keep. And possibly there was a touch of kindness in their choice,—the poor-farm was more of a home than the jail, even though it should not be a place where a wandering waif might learn to read the word of God, either in print or as it is written on the fleshy tablets of the heart.

Shack rallied quickly. By the time they arrived at the poor-farm, he could sit up in the wagon, and he got out without assistance. They pointed him to a squalid corner where he might lie down, and he slept there all the rest of the day and through the night; and he awoke restored, to all intents and purposes.

You will guess, perhaps, that he didn't tarry long in those precincts. He was under no constraint to stay, —the authorities were only too glad to be rid of a pauper, and especially of a pauper who, like Shack, was not of the parish but a wanderer from no man knew where. On the contrary there was plenty to prompt him to move on,—to say nothing of the

repulsive surroundings, there was the mere Indian of him, impatient of orderly living and monotony. Yet tarry he did, not only for days, but weeks, and months, till more than a year had passed.

That was because of the fancy he took to Sam Jackson.

Sam was not an attractive personality, either, by any ordinary test. He was easily the most luckless of all that luckless crew of dependents,—a hulking giant of a fellow whose back had been broken by a fall. It was a dreadful injury and the doctors had given the man but a few hours to live, yet he was still living. Anyway, there was still breath in him, though not much more. In many respects he would never be deader. Not a muscle could he move below the shoulders, either of arm or leg, nor had he any feeling whatever in his body. But he could eat, if he was fed. Friends he had none who would stand by him in such an extremity, and he went to the poor-farm, to take his chances of neglect, for everybody loathed him and shunned him. Why not? He was loathsome enough.

That is to say, everybody until Shack came.

Shack took to this clod of unclean mortality from the first. That which sorely disgusted everyone else affected him with some perverse charm, until you could believe he was actually fond of Sam Jackson. No parent could be more indulgent with a child than Shack was with Sam. He gave himself up to waiting on Sam's whims, and though they multiplied as they were humored, he never grew weary. All day he hovered over Sam's bed, eagerly watching for something to do to promote his comfort; and by night he slept at Sam's feet, like a faithful dog. He got poor

thanks. His freakish devotion lifted a great burden off the keeper of the farm, and won, by that, a certain reluctant appreciation. The keeper heartily despised Shack for a fool, but looked on him as a godsend, nevertheless, and showed him grudging favors designed to make him stay. That was a species of thanks, but further he got none. Sam Jackson himself repaid his lavish kindness with the sourest tolerance, and with curses, when his disabled tongue could utter them. He had less sense of his own interest than the keeper and did absolutely nothing to make Shack stay.

But to this singular connection, as to all things else, there came an end at length. One fatal day Sam essayed to swear and swallow his dinner at the same time and brought on a violent fit of coughing such that he very soon collapsed. Shack raced away to give the alarm, but the keeper was altogether indifferent. He would hardly consent to go up and see the man, and when he did it was only to look callously on the agony of death, for such it plainly was unless help should come soon. Send for a doctor? Not he! Not in a thousand years! Not on your photograph would he send for a doctor to save Sam Jackson, who was better dead than alive,—who should have died long ago, and would have done so only that he was the bullheadedest— The keeper ran on at considerable length, and worked himself into quite a temper over the suggestion that useless bills be run up on account of a fellow who had already cost the county a mighty sight more than he was worth.

The paupers stood round, listening, but Shack was not among them. Just when he left, none knew, but when they had heard the keeper out and were slinking

away, it developed that there was nobody to stay with Sam,—Shack had vanished and was nowhere to be found. No great embarrassment resulted, however. Paupers, vaguely designated as some of you fellers, were detailed for the service, but as soon as the keeper's back was turned they deserted their post and left Sam to fight it out alone. Shack was pretty much forgotten when suddenly, some hours later, he put in an appearance, coming in the Indian style like a dry leaf before the wind, with Dr. Robert driving at his heels. Whence and wherefore he had gone stood thus revealed, even to the dull pauper mind,—he had gone to summon the doctor, and the doctor's home was a good ten miles off.

The keeper was furious. He'd a mind, he declared, to cut the bloody heart out of the bloody pauper who knew so little how to attend to his own bloody business. To this sanguinary talk Shack listened untroubled, but when the keeper blustered to the doctor, vowing he should have no pay for his visit since nobody in authority had called him, that was different, and Shack was visibly alarmed. But the doctor made answer that he didn't care so much about pay if there was somebody who needed him, whereat Shack was even more visibly rejoiced, and hastened to lead the way up to the attic, where Sam had his bed.

The man was dead, and cold. He had been dead a long time, the doctor said. "I have doubt," you would know Dr. Robert was a Frenchman at once you heard him speak, "I have doubt could I have save him. His life was hang by the slender thread."

The keeper growled that he was better dead. The paupers, standing about, were not sorry,—awed, in a way, perhaps, but not sorry.

And why should there be any regrets, after all? It would be hard to say, hard to assign a reason why. Shack stood by the bed, looking down on the face of the dead, and when they saw him dropping tears, and pretty copiously, too, they deemed it wonderfully strange, the keeper, the paupers, the doctor,—especially the doctor. He whispered and asked if they two had been relatives, the dead man and the man who wept; and he was amazed to be informed that they had not so much as known each other, until lately.

“Bugs!” said the keeper, and jerked his thumb toward Shack, with a wink.

The doctor got into his buggy and drove away. It was a covered buggy, with the top turned back,—he could not see behind it without standing up, and he was not likely to stand up, the way he drove. His cattle were two lithe, hardy bronchos, and he pushed them along about as fast as they could cover the ground. The roads were deep and heavy with mud all the distance.

When he drew up at his home, after near two hours of hard riding, and before he had time to alight, a man came out from behind the buggy. He made a startling apparition, daubed as he was from head to foot with wet clay,—clay in his hair, clay splotted all over his face.

It was Shack. He had run behind the buggy from the poor-farm.

The doctor remembered him.

“Ah, you are here then!” he said, looking down in kindly astonishment.

“You will show me how to read this book,” said Shack, and held up the sky-pilot’s Bible.

He spoke confidently, as having no doubt whatever.

CHAPTER III

A PHYSICIAN FOR HEALING

IF Shack was an odd stick, Dr. Robert was odd, too,—so much, if no more, these two had in common. To belong to an ancient and wealthy family (the Roberts had come in with the missionaries or very soon after, to buy furs at an enormous profit and take up lands for a song which should one day be worth a fabulous fortune); to go abroad and study medicine at the best schools of Paris and Vienna; and then, at last, with all the world to choose from, to settle down in the obscurest of crossroads hamlets, staying there year after year though his practice yielded him but the scantiest living,—could anything make a man out much odder?

Yet that was Dr. Robert, and it was only the beginning of his oddity. He was little and black and thin and wiry, but most of all was that trick of singularity,—he certainly had it.

A man may be queer, yet have a constancy whereby after some acquaintance with him, you get to understand about how to take him; but it wasn't at all so with Dr. Robert. He had you completely bewildered, no matter how long you had known him. If you set him down for one thing, he straightway showed himself another. To be sure he was always kind, but even

at that he was full of surprises. Though a manner of seraphic sweetness should sugar over his kindness to-day, there would be no telling about to-morrow, or an hour hence,—as likely as not he would overlay his next favor with such a crustiness as to make you doubt his good intentions. You couldn't count with entire assurance on his French politeness, even, though that was undeniably a strong habit with him. He assumed to be rather more than a doctor of medicine among his people,—some thought he assumed too much, at times. In point there was the case of the certain woman who found herself in the predicament of the venerable female who lived in a shoe,—that is to say, she had so many children she didn't know what to do. She was of the clay to be embittered by her burdens, and she made her household very uncomfortable, particularly her husband, who at length consulted Dr. Robert in the view that his wife was perhaps a little insane.

The doctor went at once, and expostulated with the woman, all in his suavest manner. But she was not pleased at being taken to task, however gently, and flared back at him angrily.

“Why should I make a beast of burden of myself?” she demanded.

“Because, my dear,” for all his learning the doctor could neither speak nor write English without a quaint French coloring, and such spoony phrases were a part of it, “because, my dear, it is precisely the duty of you.”

The woman sniffed. What was duty to her?

“Well, as to that, duty is our bridge to heaven!”

Robert was reputed an unbeliever. How did it lie in an unbeliever's mouth to be preaching about heaven?

The woman caught at the inconsistency and threw it up at him.

He was determined to be sweet that day. "Ah, my dear," quoth he, "it is not by any means the heaven of the theologians. Not in the little! The heaven, understand me, of the here and the now. Life he would be one desolate affair without duties to do. You are fortunate for being the woman, and a mother, for that the duty of the mother is without doubt the most perfect bridge of all. If you were to lose your children, you would perceive what I say."

Quite a number were of the opinion that Dr. Robert was out of his place giving advice of that sort. What man, and especially what unmarried man, could understand whereof he ventured so airily to speak?

He lived all alone in a rude cabin builded with his own hands,—a home as odd as the man who dwelt in it. It was so open to the weather that public sentiment pronounced it unfit for human habitation; but if you proposed any such misgivings to him, he would laugh at you, and quote a famous Irish physician (Robert insisted that he was famous and a high authority though nobody else had ever heard of him),—a Dr. Lyne, who taught that a house, in order to be rightly habitable, should have never a door which a dog mightn't crawl in under, or a window which a bird mightn't fly out at. And one thing was undeniable,—Dr. Robert kept wonderfully good health. The story went that he was never sick, never so much as had a cold. During the historic epidemic of black diphtheria, the slightest contact with which meant deadly infection to everybody else, he came off unscathed, though he went as he was called, and was often nurse as well as physician. Two other doctors, within fifty

miles, died of the plague, and they had sprinkled themselves endlessly with disinfectants, whereas Robert took no such precautions.

Both within and without it was an extraordinary cabin. You were struck, on entering, with the bare rafters, unadorned except by plentiful cobwebs heavily hung with dust; and with the studding, likewise bare, but filled all round with books. Countryfolks were awed by the array of books, and forced to a high respect for the learning betokened; but quite differently affected by the litter on the floor, of ashes, and chips of firewood, and sand brought in by careless feet,—the accumulation of years, it was thought. Sometimes, when he was in the mood, and there were women present, the doctor would have a word of apology for the dirt.

“The man-beast who shall be unblessed by feminine companionship,” he would say, bobbing his funny little bow, “he will procure himself to live on the very friendly terms with much dirt. And is dirt so the terrible thing, after all? Ha! If you let him be, in the place which he will choose to lie, he will do me no harm, positively not. He is thick upon my floor, but does he incommode me? No! Only as I should stir him up, with my broom, and render him angry and malignant with my poking, would he settle on my books and my papers, to bother me much. *Quieta non movere*, is it not so?”

The Latin was a deft touch, though unconsciously so. Of all the doctor's sophistries this did most to give the women a feeling that his flagrant disregard of the conventions was somehow justified.

Women had something of a grudge against him, to begin with. How should they not take it as a species

of affront to their sex that he had never married and, to all appearances, was bent on not marrying? A man living alone, year after year, and giving every indication of enjoying himself notwithstanding, he as good as accuses womenkind of being superfluous, and nobody likes to be accused of being superfluous. But with the doctor's youth, as insensibly and not less certainly, that grudge had passed. By degrees the women came to look on Robert as a man dispensed from matrimony; and they were the more easily appeased as it appeared that the woman who should become the wife of so odd a stick would fall upon anything but a happy lot. The doctor would be kind to his wife, in the uncertain way he was kind to all, but beyond that—well, women had long since given up quarreling with Robert's singleness.

No diploma hung on his walls. Most doctors, especially of late years, were proud to display diplomas, for a testimony; but if Dr. Robert had such a thing he kept it out of sight. There were those who believed he had none,—the other doctors almost to a man; they didn't like him, they accused him of violating the code of professional ethics, and they did not scruple to intimate that he would be excluded from practice only that he had been a professing physician for more than fifteen years and was thereby prescriptively exempt from the operation of the law requiring a medical man to show a diploma or stand examination. Possibly there was something in it,—certainly he made no great parade of technical knowledge and seemed to discredit, rather than otherwise, much of the advanced theory of healing. He openly confessed his inability to cure every ill flesh is heir to, and declared over and over that temperance in all things was the beginning

and the end of good health. And particularly was it his custom to warn his patients, no matter what their ailment, that they were digging their graves with their teeth, by which he meant that they lived not wisely but too well,—ate too much, in short.

He was modest in his charges,—beyond all example modest.

Instances without number had gone into tradition. One, called to mind as often as any, perhaps, was that of a man who had something the matter with his eye, something so afflicting that he went to the city for relief, and consulted a famous specialist. The specialist held out small hope, wanted \$75 for a preliminary operation and no telling how much more, and the man backed out,—he was poor and such talk frightened him. As the drowing man clutches at a straw he took his eye to Dr. Robert. Could he do anything for it? Well, he could try, at all events, and try he did. That is, he resorted copiously to warm water, and very little else, and told the man to come back in a week. In a week the eye was about well. How much? Oh, twenty-five cents, quoth Dr. Robert.

Another instance was that of a half-grown girl, who fell and hurt her leg, and lay in bed with it for months, and though she got up at last, walked but hardly, with crutches. They took her to the specialists, too, and the specialists were for operating, right away. How much? Well, \$100,—since the people were poor; if they had been rich it would be \$1,000,—specialists weren't wholly devoid of the bowels of mercy. But the operation would leave the girl a cripple, and her father and mother shrank from that, and came home, and consulted Dr. Robert,—clutching at the last straw. What did he think? Why, that the girl only fancied

she was lame, was under some sort of hysterical delusion, not an uncommon thing at her age. He took her in hand, adroitly, won her confidence, beguiled her into trying to walk,—and before very long she was as well as ever. What was his fee? Oh, nothing!—he had done nothing, why should he charge a fee?

Over the doctor's head, as he sat by his rough pine table to minister to his neighbors with much of counsel and little of drugs, there was a sheet of cardboard tacked up, with these words printed on it, in large letters, with an unskilled pen:

“ Herz, was willst du mehr? ”

The countryside never quite settled, in its own mind, the significance of this inscription, or, for that matter, its origin. Some called it Latin, some called it Greek, and a few, who had heard of Hebrew, called it Hebrew. There were no Germans in those parts, as it chanced, and the sentiment remained a mystery through all the years. None thought of asking the doctor about that or any other matter personal to himself,—in that quarter curiosity knew itself helpless.

But two other sheets of cardboard likewise nailed up, were in plain English, such that he might read who ran:

“ Disappointment is the same sort of tonic for the soul that Hardship is for the body.”

And:

“ Blessed is the strong man who knows Disappointment, for he shall be made stronger.”

Unthoughtful neighbors were perplexed by these proposals, and found them enigmatical to the last. Still, the likelihood was, seeing what honor was given

them, that they were distillations of wisdom. Some minute critic or other had discovered internal evidence that they were not of the doctor's own getting up,—they didn't sound Frenchy enough; most likely he had copied them out of some book.

There was yet more oddity nailed up,—a great print portrait, almost life-size, of Pope Leo XIII, in his pontifical robes. That was the occasion of perplexity, too. Had the doctor artfully put up the portrait to flatter the Canadian French, who were numerous thereabouts, and all strong Catholics? Hardly,—that wouldn't be like him; he was the last person in the world to curry favor. Was it then simply because he admired the gorgeous colors? The printers had certainly made a fine show, with their colors. For a cheap lithograph, it was remarkable.

* * * * *

And so, oddly enough, these two odd sticks had come together.

BOOK II
DR. ROBERT'S DIARY

DR. ROBERT'S DIARY

6 of March.

It is I, Oliver Robert, who set down these remarks. They concern a strange being, his name Jacques.

He knows no other name.

He is French & he is Indian. He is also something else. He tells me nearly nothing, only that he has lived in the pineries. But I know he is Indian,—the bones of his face are that. I know he is French,—it is in his talk. The more in him, what it may be, I know not.

I saw him 1st on yesterday the day before.

He came much alarmed. He said: "There is a man choking himself at the Poor Farm!"

I said: "Very well!"

Thereupon I drove thither. I would willing have take the strange being in my buggy, only he was already gone, & when I arrive to the Poor Farm, he is before me. It is ten miles, which he must have walk, or run. The patient he was died, & the strange being wept over him. They were then brothers, or at all events cousins germans? Not so! They were not known to themselves before recently.

In the next place I arrive home. I alight from my buggy. What shall I now behold but the strange being! He has run behind from the Poor Farm which is still ten miles and the road very bad. He was much muddled. He was, in fact, a sight!

Myself: "What is your name?"

Strange Being: "Jacques!"

By that I knew he was French. He spoke the name with a perfection.

He had with him a book. In it he wished me to teach him, how that he should read it. I looked at the the book. It was the Bible.

Precisely it is the compatriot of Renan which I, Oliver Robert, am. The Christian Church is a dead corpse. A mummy, embalmed with much skill in windings of ceremony & for that alone suffered to remain above the ground among the living. So have I made up my mind. What is the Bible to me that I shall teach strange beings to read in it?

At all events I unhitch my horses. I put them in the barn. They are much muddled & they are steam with sweat. I go into the loft to procure them hay. I come back. What do I behold? Jacques has rub the horses with straw till they are dry & clean.

Excellent!

I declared, with a laugh: "It is the first time!"

Beyond the doubt I am shameful with my horses. I feed them well, it is likely. Yet I never rub them. *Vita brevis!*

I said: "Come!" & we proceed into the house.

I consider the matter of supper. What have we for supper to-night? I asked myself this forthwith.

I peer into my cupboard. What do I behold? A kettle filled in part with cold mush. Some milk. A small quantity of butter. Tea. For the making welcome a guest it is not much. However, it must suffice. I go to the stove. A fire is necessary, for the tea.

I feel a touch. I turn. It is Jacques. He exclaims: "Me!"

He taps his breast. I understand him. It is like a Frenchman to speak with his hand, & like another Frenchman to understand him. I say: "Very well!" I sit down.

He lights the fire, adroitly. He find an old pan. In this he melt a little of the butter. He cut the cold mush in delicate slices, after which, in the butter, he fry them, till they are crisp & brown. He make the tea in a manner such that my cabin has the sweet savor filling it & my nostrils are rejoiced exceedingly. From the cupboard he bring 2 cups, 1 plate, 2 knives, which he lay on the table. At length he say: "Supper is ready!"

I reply: "So am I!"

It is true I pronounce fried food unwholesome. Yet I find myself devouring the mush. I am ready to conjecture that I have tasted nothing so good in long years.

I observe, frankly: "If I dig my grave with my teeth, the time is at hand when I should be digging it with something. I shall have use for it, in the presently."

I am facetious, yet the strange being does not laugh. Such is the Indian. The Indian laughs not with humor and merriment, only with scorn.

In the pineries very good cookery will be found. By this they keep the men in contentment. In the lonesomeness the men will become downcast & meditate leaving their work, only for the good cookery. Cooks are employed who will prepare a tasteful dinner. It is of these Jacques learned the art, I am assure.

He is cook for me & yet more. To-day, I being absent, he sweeps the floor. It is like a new house. I

enter & I am in doubt. Is it my house which I have come home to? The floor is spotless. But the dust? There is no bit of it to see.

To-night I have talk with him more searchingly. I resolve to begin with teaching him French. It is his proper vehicle. The English it is strong. But where there is a delicacy, shall it be convey in a lumber-wagon?

17 of March.

A soul in fetters! As well it may be a great soul. Who knows?

I dare question if such position ever was before.

A bird, imprisoned. Peradventure an eagle. No, I will believe it a gentler soul than that. Some bird rather with sweet songs in its throat silenced by captivity! It strive for freedom that it may utter forth its music. That is the position.

Especially, this soul up till yet finds no fit tongue, such as it may hold communion by means of, either with itself, or with another. For the lack of a tongue it has never yet spoken. English is good, for the Englishman. For the Frenchman, it is the lumber-wagon. Why then do I employ it? That I may speak with my people. Besides, I have nothing but lumber to convey. With Jacques it is otherwise.

He has the Indian tongue, but the Indian is nothing. The grunting of beasts, little more.

But when I speak to Jacques in French for the first time, he holds his breath with listening. He is radiant, as if he hear the voice once more of his beloved long lost. I make no doubt it is the 1st time he hear the language of Molière, of Voltaire, of Hugo. Yet almost he understand me.

I have teach him the French words for objects, & he was overjoy to say them over & over. When he have learn enough to answer me back, his delight was nearly frantic.

Again! From this moment he speaks English less well. To-day he speak it brokenly, like a new Frenchman. I have need to take care. He will have use for the English.

This I remember when it bethinks me to procure him a French Bible. To read the Bible he is anxious, & with French he will get on fast, but there is more. No, we shall keep the Bible in English. So I decide. I read from the Bible to him, turning a word into French now and again. The French for the delicacy, the English for the lumber, if he have the both that will be well.

3 of April.

Like a candle guttering! The fat wastes with the flame which flare up. Better for him to burn in a steady fashion. No, that would make of him the ordinary person.

He is restless.

In his body he is frail. Yet he ran behind the buggy ten miles. He have already before then run, or walk, twenty miles. He was not exhausted after all. Nervous! Strength of the nerve, summoned up.

Bodily much is wrong with him. His heart, however, is worst.

It is too slow. Again it is too fast.

When his heart is slow, you will deem him a simpleton, no more. He is then dull & sluggish. But when his heart is fast, his mood grow high. He is exalted, like no man I ever met with. How his eyes light up!

Though with nothing or little of the intellect. All is feeling.

To what end? I have ask myself that.

He babbles at times till I fear him to become a lunatic. He makes strife to tell me something, in words. It is something of his feeling. But his words are drivel. However, he affects me. In his high mood there flow from him a feeling, an emotion, such that I am touch by it. In a manner am I carried away. I am aware of a new principle of conviction working within me. He will almost make me believe without reason. Yet what? Not yet does it appear.

He is restless more and more. The spring, which wakens, calls to him. He will stand in the posture of listening, as if voices were in the air. Do I speak to him then, he answers me not. Hears me not. Nor sees.

He remains the Indian in much respects. Woodcraft he understands wonderfully. He will snare part-ridges, but that is not all. He has a club. It resembles the boomerang of the bushman. With his club he will kill wild chickens as they fly. He have the scent of the dog, for he knows when chickens are near, in the manner of the dog.

He will fish admirably. The bullheads, as he prepares them, are admirable.

Such dining! Feasts of Lucullus! It is a glutton I am become. I dig my grave with my teeth, but now I shall need it larger, so fat have I grown. Accordingly, I have the more digging to do!

I explain this joke to Jacques, in French as well as English. Yet he will not laugh. It is too merry.

However, I have hear him laugh. He will have me read often from the Bible. I, Oliver Robert, from

the Bible! One day it is of Moses, of Jehovah in the burning bush, and he will laugh. It is scornful laughter. Sardonical.

And saying nothing.

When he is disturbed I know by his eyes, & by his neck. In his neck the great artery swells & throbs till you think it may well burst.

15 of July.

We live in a bower. Jacques have made it so. It is my fashion to neglect all. *Nux erchetai!* The little field was not tilled formerly. I had not the taste for husbandry & those boys whom I employ they took my pay and will give me but small services. During the last summer cows pushed down the fence & devoured the corn whereupon I was resolved to plant no more.

Jacques mended the fence. He make the old boards suffice though many are broken. He finds posts, I know not where. The expense is nothing. Even the old nails he will save, making each of them straight with much pains. But withal the fence is not handsome. However, he is not done. He repair to the woods & procure vines of the wild grape to set out along the fence & they spring up to cover it wholly. The house, next! From the woods he bring likewise woodbine to plant near the house and they have climb to the roof. To live rightly in such lodge I should be a poet.

In the field grow all manner of good vegetables, with no weed to be seen. Here and there, as the odd corner will present itself, he has a flower or a shrub,—all from the woods. What may he not find in those woods?

His babbling embraces much mention of God. His

nature have of the religious a portion, not surprisingly, since he is emotional.

He seeks God, who eludes him.

You will say, at times, that the God he yearn to find shall perhaps be none other than great Pan, who dwells in limpid waters & rustling airs, in leaves & in the sward, in the mounting sap which is the life of plants. For he will speak confusedly of God & the Norway (a common species of the pine tree), of God & the lake, of God & the sun. But more than all is his delight in the woods, how happy among his vines & his vegetables. Especial peace broods over him.

Not for long, however. That which he seeks is not found.

You observe him. He is in communion, you may say, with great Pan. The especial peace is upon him. But behold it is presently trouble, like the surface of the waters. For the first place a soft breeze of doubt will blow over. There will be a cloud form in his face. He pause. He hesitate. He look about him while the doubt grow stronger. He look about him more & more as one who is lost from his way. At length he turn away. It is back to his books. I come upon him toiling among them. He reads here and there. He brings something to me to be read.

Mostly it is the Bible. The name of God is much there. Very often he hears it as we go on. He listen intently. But his brow is knit. He does not start up in recognition.

He is eluded & yet again eluded.

1 of August.

To-day it was *L'Etoile du Nord* which he brought me. This is a small newspaper which is printed in

Quebec. An old friend who is very Catholic has it sent to me, for the good of my soul, since it is very Catholic likewise. In Quebec all is very Catholic. But I peruse it not a little, inasmuch as it is print in very good French. No *patois*.

Jacques he enjoy to read it, too. Because it is very Catholic? Well, possibly! The very Catholic—the very emotional—it is a connection, not impossible.

Indeed, he pores over *L'Etoile du Nord* until he have peruse, I daresay, every word.

To-day, as I have remark, he bring it to me with the beseechment that I read to him a certain article. This is an article of length, which is no less than the report of a falling out, a rupture, between the Church and the civil power, in France. The *Concordat* of Napoleon, it would seem, have been violated. But in any case, the revenues of the clergy are greatly diminish, such that the bishop of the diocese have come forth with an appeal to the faithful at large. He will have the faithful send him money, that he may support his clergy.

It is the bishop's appeal which Jacques wishes me to read. He has read it for himself, but he will make sure he has it right.

Particularly these words:

“Some of my priests earn their living by mending watches or manufacturing beehives. Others till the soil, knit jerseys, or follow agricultural pursuits. All that is not very noble or worthy of the sacerdotal calling.”

I have never seen Jacques so indignant up till yet. His eyes will flash, his neck throb greatly.

He cries: “Why is it not noble?”

I answer: “It is not fashionable. The fashion rules in all things. The fashion is for the priest to

keep his hands white for the service of God. He may not soil them, with the hard work of the world, or God will be offended."

I am bitter? It may well be. But I regret. Jacques stares at me, he turns away abruptly, he mutters with many gestures. There is confusion within him, I have made it more so. I regret this.

Should I ruthlessly approach, with my eyes folded blind, a closet stored with precious porcelains? It is not likely. He gropes, but who am I to guide him, with my bitterness? It is easy to make the youth unbelievers, but wherefore? Is it that the unbeliever is so happy in his unbelief?

He is in the forest. He will work his own way out, however.

Yet we may sing together without harm. By that he is soothed. I play my viol, not, indeed, as an artist, but with sincerity. I sing. Jacques, he too has the voice, as we presently discover. He joins with me & it is much comfort while no porcelains are broken.

16 of August.

[Since 1 week, much has come to pass!

Before then, he was begun to fall away from the books. Almost I may say he shun these. His countenance wore the look of defeat, of chagrin. It was sullen. He consort more with great Pan, but to what comfort? Very little. If he went often to the woods, it was not to loiter, to drink in the joy of the place. Rather was it to flit, in the manner of the uneasy ghost.

When he came in he was at times haggard. Once he was wet with sweat.

It was the hour of desperate searchings, of gropings. The barrier was before him. No opening.

He suffered. What is worse than conscious impotence? I had pity, why should I not go to his aid?

But no! My part was not that. I might provide him with his vehicle, namely, the French. I might read to him, when he will ask me. I might sing with him, to soothe him. But further, nothing! So I told myself.

I would not so much as leave certain books in his way. I would not move one of them from its place in order that he might the more or the less encounter with it. No, no! Let them be as they were. To that effect I made my determination.

A soul was being born, in short. I was but the midwife, not the parent!

Yet nevertheless, since 1 week, what happens?

This! He returns from the woods, it is possibly 3 o'clock in the P. M. Since dinner he has been out. He is pallid, breathless, sweaty. He sinks into a chair. He stares dully before him.

His eyes wander over the books. I observe him and my belief is he sees nothing. Soon, however, he gathers his attention upon a certain corner, though it should be but languidly. Afterwards he rises. He walks over. He takes down from the shelf five volumes.

They are the five volumes of *Les Misérables*, that chiefest of epics, of human documents the very important.

It is not in the least of my doing. It was there the volumes were the day he came. I have not put them in his way.

He opens. The print is small. There has come

upon him a disgust of reading. *Les Misérables* is enormous. The five volumes, with the small print,—he may well be irresolute, on opening. A crisis! He puts the books down. He turns away. But straightway he turns back. He takes up volume the I, he stands reading. He reads on. He resumes his seat but he reads on.

That was 1 week since.

To-day, should I mistake not, the soul is born.

I have been all day on a far call. Evening was fallen when I reach home. I found Jacques and never had I beheld him so. That he was much wrought upon, who should deny? Yet calm. He attend the commonplaces of the chore. The horses he put in the stables. He rub them. He feed them. He omit nothing of the ordinary but made the supper, swept the hearth, set all in order. The while, I could ask myself if he was well aware of doing these things. There was an air about him, of absence.

At length, each thing being done, he laid before me volume the I of *Les Misérables*.

He says: "Read! Read to me, all about Bishop Welcome!"

Ah, the best of bishops! The bishop too good to dwell anywhere save in a book! How shall I not be glad to read of him? How shall I not put the heart in my reading? If there is that in my voice, in my manner, which is affecting, I shall not wonder. Jacques hears, without moving. From time to time I will look up. Always I behold him in a silent rapture, in a serene transport. In his eyes the light of tranquil exulting! As for his neck, it has never throbbed so slightly. He is lifted to a contentment, of a lofty description.

The conjecture sweeps over me that the soul is born. Shall I hear its cry, its first wail of conscious life?

No! There is not a word from him, not a sound, though I am done reading at length.

However, he retire to rest. In a little I overhear him. He is weeping.

I call to him: "Jacques, my boy, can you not sleep?"

He answers: "I do not wish to sleep! If I sleep I shall forget!"

But now, as I write, he sleeps, after all. Very well for him. In his high moods he may be not far from insanity.

It is 2 o'clock in the A. M.

19 of August

This morning it is very early when he is dressing himself already. Before 5 o'clock, & the sun not risen. Misgiving assails me. Since 2 days now there has been a resolution gathering in his face. Since 2 days have I foreboded.

I spring up. I go to him.

I say: "My boy, what is this?"

He say: "I must be about my father's business!"

It makes me astonishment when he repeats the words of Jesus. And the pain! "I must be about my father's business!" says he, & my heart sinks.

This is my thought: He has found that which he was seeking.

I question: "Whose business?"

He is silent. But I am bold to go on with him. The pain of foreboding, for that I will know.

Myself: "Your father's business, what shall it be?"

Jacques: "To feed his sheep!"

Myself: "The sheep, they are where?"

Jacques: "Where many sheep are, who look up and are not fed!"

As I have foreboded! He will leave me!

I am selfish. The pang wrings this from me: "Is not old Robert sheep enough to feed?"

However he is silent. He looks beyond me. He moves off, hurriedly. He is going at once? Even so! Yet it is not more abruptly than he came.

I stifle my selfishness.

I remark: "You will need money."

He demands: "Did St. Francis need money?"

It makes me astonishment that he know of St. Francis. But I expostulate: "These United States are not Italy. Nor is the 19 century the 12!"

He retorts: "The sheep look up and are not fed!"

Only my entreaty prevail over him. He take the money. It is but a small sum. He set out. I call to him good-bye. He does not hear me. This is heart-wringing.

He will return. Or is it only that I hope?

25 of August.

So strangely he came, so strangely he went away, I can wonder if he was not the part of a dream! But no, yonder are the vines. And yonder is the field of corn almost white for the sickle.

How could he leave all,—great Pan, the household, the horses, old Robert?

He go better than he came,—he have the use of his mind much more.

Not that reason has been enthroned supreme. Not at all. With him such can never be. His purpose is

given to him by his feelings, which are ever in the command of him. But now they have for their servant, as not before, the useful mind. It is as if he should be a ship, bound for yonder port. The feelings are his engines, but they cannot very well sail him. He flounders. He drifts. He is at times near the rocks. Mind is the skilful navigator, until now asleep. He wakes. He takes the wheel. It is the same port, same ship, same engines. Only the pilot have come on board.

7 of September.

I am moved to read afresh about the good bishop, but behold, of *Les Misérables*, the volume I is not to be found.

Jacques has taken it with him. Otherwise it would not be gone.

BOOK III

A VOICE CRYING IN THE
WILDERNESS

CHAPTER I

THE WILDERNESS

IT would not be like an Indian to take thought of the morrow, or provide aught against the time of scarcity. Why should he trouble himself? If game fails, he knows berries and barks which will feed him. If berries and barks fail, he knows how to draw up his belt and stifle his hunger for a long time. And when all else fails, he knows how to die without taking death hard. No, he will not provide, nor yet will he hesitate, in prudent fear of want, to go whithersoever the fancy leads him. But what if fancy, or some sublimer thing, shall lead him into a great city? There he is clean cut off from his good mother, the earth. She is so overlaid with brick and asphalt that he may not even touch her, unless it should be where some sorry little park uncovers her in a niggardly, mocking fashion. Anyway, she is no more his mother, taking care of all his needs, stretching out her bountiful hand to him. There is plenty to eat, all about him,—mountains of food,—more than he ever saw before; but it is to be had only by grace of strange powers, whose graces he has never cultivated.

Shack had never learned to beg. The occasion for begging was always lacking. In his life hitherto, if there was food at all, it was forthcoming for everybody without the asking; and if there was none, no-

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body's asking would make it forthcome. If food did not offer, he knew no alternative but going without, and to that alternative he was not a stranger. To go hungry was not such a new experience that it would soon turn him to new expedients.

Had he kept his bit of money, he might presently have mastered, though in a rudimentary way, the art of spending, of making those scraps of metal serve him. Dr. Robert had given him theoretical instruction, and not without effect, though Shack's ears were undoubtedly rendered pretty deaf by his exaltation; and practical lessons would not be withheld. But the money he did not keep. He was robbed the first night he lay in the city, and stripped of his last penny.

For him it was no great walk,—a day and a night (his wish to get on wouldn't let him sleep) and part of another day. Walking, for him, was as easy as breathing, and he wasn't tired. Nor was he hungry, as yet, though it was hours since food had passed his lips. He started out with a goodly stock of bread and meat tied up in a paper, but by the time he had met half a dozen tramps who did not scruple to help themselves, he hadn't a morsel left. That didn't matter, though,—his wish to get forward wouldn't let him think much about eating, anyway. There was plenty to remind him, too, especially in the hour of his arrival, which wasn't far from noon, and the houses in the outskirts were sending forth strong smells of cookery. It would be like him to step into a house, any house, and sit down to the table without bidding, but he did nothing of the sort. The houses weren't camps and the people weren't lumberjacks,—everything, in short, was very, very strange; and Shack let his hunger wait while he pushed on.

It was just here that he began to be keenly on the watch for those sheep, looking up. Watching for these, he could forget the inner man, pretty much.

He met many people, thousands upon thousands by nightfall, but though he scanned them eagerly, there was none who had more than a passing glance for him,—so lightly did they regard him that he could wonder if they really saw him at all. Men and women and children, an endless hurrying throng,—were these the sheep who were not fed? If so, they were very cool and indifferent about it.

As evening drew on, the great buildings downtown poured out their workers, and the workers went streaming off in every direction, and the streets were like very rivers of humanity. It was then a blind man with a hand-organ posted himself at a busy corner and ground out tunes; and he held his face so turned that you could fancy, if you were a trustful, eager boy just out of the woods,—that you could fancy he was looking up with the eyes of the spirit. Anyway, there was a hungry expectancy about him. But he had a tin cup into which someone would now and then drop a coin, and as often as that happened you saw the hungry expectancy give way, for a moment, to unmistakable joy.

Shack dropped in a coin, the very largest he had, a silver dollar. It was almost too big to go into the cup, and it fell with a sort of a crash which made the blind man start and stop grinding. And who ever beheld such joy as his when his fingers clutched the great broad piece of money?

That was one sheep fed, at all events.

Shack wasn't thinking for a moment of a place to sleep. He was for going right on with his search,

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regardless of the season. So long as there remained people abroad, it was for him to be awake; and when there should be no more people, he had only to throw himself down anywhere,—no Indian, least of all an Indian with such a mission, would take forethought of a place to sleep. Nevertheless, it somehow made him rather glad and grateful when a young woman accosted and asked him where he was staying that night and, when he showed by his answer that he didn't know, kindly invited him to go with her. Her kindness served to show him, all at once, how lonesome he really was, how hurt he was in his heart by meeting so many strange persons and none of them giving him a nod.

She was very gracious, very. There was nothing about her to suggest that she was one of the sheep, however,—no looking up or anything of that character. She made much prattling talk as they walked along together, whither she led, through dark and wretched streets; but little to the point. He told her about his father's business, and at length felt so well acquainted that he offered to read to her from his books; and she listened courteously if not thirstily,—at any rate she was willing to hear. Once they glanced ahead and by the light of a shop window saw a big man in blue and brass, and the girl seized him by the arm and pulled him over to the other side where it was darker, and that seemed altogether queer. Still, everything was queer, for that matter, and there was no denying the kindness,—who else in the city had been so kindly?

They turned in finally at a species of beehive, only bees would never be up and about so late. But like bees men, and women, were going in and coming

out, incessantly, by a door which bore considerable resemblance to that of a hive. Beyond it you entered a long, low room, which would put you in mind of a lumber camp, though it wasn't so clean, and there were no bunks. At one corner there were shelves, filled with bottles and glasses, and a tall bench in front of them. The floor was covered with sawdust much mingled with dirt, and there were tables, and some chairs. A man was hammering a clangorous piano, evoking lively airs,—much livelier and prettier than any Shack had ever heard. He was greatly pleased with the music, and nothing displeased him except a certain odor which hung heavy in the air and turned him faint. It brought up a disagreeable memory, of the time the playful jacks made him tipsy, and he was so miserably sick and dizzy. He wished to run away from the odor, it was so unpleasant, but the young woman wouldn't let him.

She was mightily gracious about it, though. She threw her arms tenderly round his neck, when he started for the door, and with the gentlest violence pulled him down into a chair, and besought him, in such melting accents, to remain, that it was difficult not to yield. At the same time a man in an apron came out from among the glassware with two big foaming mugs, which he set down on the table before them.

There was a mug for each of them.

"Here's looking at you!" cried the young woman, and drank from her mug,—a singular sentiment, yet clearly kind, for she clapped him on the back.

Shack sniffed at the stuff; but it had none of the sickening odor, and he drank it. Nothing could be more certain than that the young woman would have

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him drink it. In fact, she frankly told him so, and besought him to be a good fellow,—it wasn't costing him anything. It was but a small thing she asked of him, anyway, even though the stuff was bitter, and there was so much of it he thought he should never get to the bottom of the mug. He drank it, every drop.

"Now," quoth his gentle hostess, taking him pleasantly by the hand, "let's go upstairs."

There were a great many stairs, as it turned out, and prodigiously hard to climb. Shack stumbled abominably. His feet were heavy as lead, all of a sudden. This could be accounted for, however, by his having sat down. Anyone who has footed it much knows how that is. You can walk for hours and hours, provided you keep walking, whereas if you sit down by the way, you find, when you go on, that your feet have become very heavy and hard to drag along. Shack had tarried by the table some little time, listening to the music and drinking, and it was no wonder if the stairs gave him trouble.

They came to the top at last and then the young woman (she had held his hand all the way, in the pleasantest, most helpful fashion in the world) led him off through the darkness to a room. It seemed a room, at least, because he was distinctly aware of her opening a door, and pulling him through, and shutting the door behind them. Undoubtedly it was a room. The young woman struck a match, or, rather, a dozen matches all at once, and lighted a dozen lamps or such a matter, some of them upside down and none of them standing still; and thereupon nothing could be plainer than that they were in the room. The walls were clearly visible, undulating on every side. It was a

little room, and there was nothing in it to sit down on but a number of beds, and Shack sat down on these and felt very much fagged. That was about all. He had no intention of going to sleep, but the next he knew he was waking up, with a struggle, and there was only one lamp, dingy and unlighted, and the day was pushing in through a very small and very unclean window. He was lying across the bed—there was only one bed, now—in all his clothes; and he was alone.

As he struggled more and more awake these circumstances began to strike him as the most extraordinary yet. How came he to be there? He recalled the young woman. What had become of her? Well, likely she had retired to some other room,—Shack was not too ignorant of the proprieties to understand why that should be. But whether or no, it was time to be getting up. He rose to his feet, struggling still,—there was a weight on his chest, and the moment he lifted his head it swam off his shoulders. That rather alarmed him, and he thought only of getting out,—the young woman and all else forgotten. He fell twice before he reached the door, though it didn't seem exactly like falling either,—more as if the floor reared on edge and bumped itself against him; and the stairs, though less numerous than they had been last night, were bothersome enough, with his feet like clods and his head floating off all the time.

Faithful instinct was guiding him to the open air and its restoring touch, and he had tottered uncertainly halfway across the bar, when the man in the apron laid hold of him roughly.

“Here, pay for your lodging!” he growled, and held out his hand. “Room—cost you a dollar.”

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The demand did not appear unreasonable,—Shack was enough instructed in matters fiscal for that. If the young woman's cordial manner had given him some expectation of being entertained without money and without price, it prompted no expostulation now. He was mightily confused, but there was still the sense or impulse to send his hand to the pocket where his money had lain.

The pocket was empty. The money was gone.

The man looked on sourly, and understood. There was no getting juice out of a squeezed orange,—there was only the consolation of flying into a passion.

“Get out, you Rube!” he snarled, with a gush of profanity, and gave Shack a push and a kick which sent him through the door in a hurry.

He wasn't ruffled by the indignity, not in the least. A youth who had not been pushed and kicked from pillar to post all his life long might feel a hot resentment and meditate vengeance, but not Shack. Besides, he had something more urgent to think about, namely his head, which, when it wasn't floating off, was bursting; and his feet, which were almost more trouble than he could manage. He was out of doors, and that was a great relief,—what should make him wish to go back in? He felt the touch of the air and blessed it in the unconscious, savage way. But if air was much water would be more. Where was there some water? Without a thought of the man or his affront, Shack went searching for water.

He hadn't far to go. Just round the corner he came upon a huge iron horse-trough, brimming over. He ran up and plunged his head into it again and again,—his head and much of his shoulders, for the water was deep, and deliciously cold. It made him

tingle wherever it touched him, and he would very likely have got in all over only that the driver of a truck rebuked him, asking him if he supposed horses liked bugs in their drink. The truckman had driven his team up, and the beasts were smelling suspiciously at the trough, though they were hot and thirsty,—no doubt the rebuke was justified. Shack scrambled out of his bath, and sat down on the curb near by, wet from head to foot, a spectacle such that people looked and wondered, but what of that? He was a great deal better,—so much better that he could collect his thoughts; and with these he was too busy to mind being stared at.

CHAPTER II.

JEAN VALJEAN IN PETTICOATS

SIN, in its very common aspects, was not a thing unheard of, though it should be unknown, in the Arcadian aisles of the pineries, or the rustic solitudes of the reservation. Traders and lumberjacks were not apt to be guarded in their conversation, and Shack had heard tell of much. He knew what robbery was, and he knew that he had been robbed, that the young woman was a thief. Perhaps, in a vague way, as a child might know such a thing, he knew what else she was; but that part didn't concern him. He thought of her as thief, and nothing more.

And Jean Valjean was a thief, too.

It was with no sense of personal injury that Shack thought of the young woman. The money was nothing much to him, anyway,—he scarcely knew how to use it,—for aught he knew to the contrary he was about as well off without it; why should he feel particularly injured? And who was he to bear in mind the injury to society, the larger significance of theft? Nobody, of course,—society, in any formal aspect, was a thing apart. But somehow there was no escaping the feeling that the young woman had done herself a wrong,—it was in that view he considered her thievery, sitting so oddly there, in his wet garments. It was the feeling more than the thought,—such a thought

would be rather too theological for Shack; he was sorry for her. That was the amount of it,—he was supremely sorry for the young woman, so much so that his eyes swam with tears.

Then came the vision,—tears might not shut that out. In a sweetly solemn vision he read the meaning of it all, foresaw that his mission was to bear fruit in the first day of it. What else? Why, if not for that, had they two come together,—he the chosen to save, and she who so needed saving,—he the shepherd, and she the sheep looking up to be fed?

The old restlessness came over him. He walked about, and the vision tarried before his eyes. After awhile he found himself down by the river, among the docks. There was a crowd of busy men and horses everywhere; he had walked off his unrest, but there was no place here for an idle fellow to sit and brood, until he came to the very end of the river-front, where an old half-rotten wharf was piled with building-stone, and rough lumber such as nobody would take the trouble to steal, and barrels of lime and salt; and not a soul about nearer than the rusty schooner moored off the far end. In there he found a sunny place in a valley of rocks and barrels, and sat down. It had been a sharp morning, and the warmth struck through his damp clothes very agreeably. His vision kept him from taking much account of bodily conditions, but the warmth seemed properly a part of it, an element in the joy of the spirit, as if the sun shone through into his very soul. He blessed the warmth as he had blessed the fresh air.

They were preparing breakfast, on board the schooner, and the odor of meat was wafted in over the dock. Could the vision keep him from taking ac-

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count of his hunger? Not easily, that was sure. A tousled man lounged on deck, staring stupidly, till a tousled woman put her head out of the cabin and called to him, and he went below, leaving Shack all to himself. The odor lingered,—there came on a sort of conflict between it and the vision,—the spiritual struggling with the fleshly. Pretty soon the tousled man came rolling up on deck again, looking very replete and comfortable, and lit his pipe, and smoked away peacefully.

It was a battle, but the vision won. The odor grew thin and vanished, the vision was brighter and brighter.

Shack brooded, ecstatically.

Jean Valjean, he, too, was a thief. He was given up to sin completely,—he was in the worst way. His specific offense, the theft of the spoons and the small silver coin, that was in itself trifling; the desperate blackness of his heart was what made him such a distinguished sinner. A distinguished sinner he knocked at Bishop Welcome's door that night, to go away at length,—not at once but at length,—a man of good will, reclaimed from sin, with the leaven of righteousness in him.

How came it about? Very simply.

Jean was hungry, and the bishop gave him to eat. He was thirsty, and the bishop gave him to drink. He was a stranger, a vile outcast whom all others had spat on, and the bishop took him in, giving him his best bed and treating him in all things as an honored guest.

But that wasn't enough. Darkness lay thick and heavy on the soul of Jean Valjean,—it was not easily

penetrated by this light of love. He rose in the dead of night and stole the bishop's silver, the few things of worth which he had left, for he had bestowed all the rest in alms. These Jean stole, and made off.

He was arrested. He was suspect, anyway, through having served in the galleys; and his having silver in his possession was enough in itself to damn him, and the crest on it told the police whose it was. Jean was arrested and dragged back in irons, to confront the good man whose goodness he had so outrageously repaid.

"Here are your eminence's spoons," said the police, addressing the bishop in terms of the respect due his exalted office.

And the bishop made answer: "They are not mine. They were mine, formerly, but I gave them to this man, who lodged with me last night."

That was what did it. With that act of grace love shot its light into the very midst of Jean's soul, and rived the darkness, and scattered it. From that day he was saved.

Shack's heart beat high. He exulted. He was carried away. Hungry? Never! It was pork-sausage they were having for breakfast, on the schooner, —seasoned strongly with sage. Does anything in the world smell better, cooking, than pork-sausage seasoned with sage? No, nothing! But if the tousled man had asked Shack down to partake, he would have declined, saying he wasn't hungry.

It was something to make him exult indeed, this thing of his being so favored at the very start, just when he was most in danger of losing courage. Here

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was his opportunity made ready for him,—almost the first person he had met in the city turning out to be a thief, who robbed him even as Jean Valjean had robbed the bishop. Very clearly it was for him to hunt the young woman up, and forgive her, in the manner of the bishop. Very clearly! For when he should have done that, the graciousness of his act must send the blessed light of love into her dark soul, to become the salvation of her.

He hunted.

You need scarcely be told how it went. The business was rather worse than the proverbial business of seeking a needle in a haystack, because a needle isn't trying to keep out of the way. But his courage was high,—the vision stayed by him. A Scotchman knows how to be steadfast, and a Frenchman, too, and an Indian,—he had the sober determination of three determined races, and the ecstatic vision besides. It was a brave hunt.

First of all he went back to the beehive, and entered unhesitatingly in at the door which he had been pushed and kicked out of so lately. The man was there, behind the bar with his bottles. He recognized Shack disdainfully.

"Hello, Rube!" he bawled out, and some bloated loafers who were lolling about looked up and laughed.

But once more Shack wasn't ruffled, having better things to think about. "I'm looking for a young woman," he said, and briefly described his precious thief. He had a good picture of her in his memory. How could he forget her, knowing her to have been sent on purpose to be saved by him?

The man knew whom he meant. "She ain't here," he growled, but right away his temper flew and he

stormed out: "You (profanity) fool, do you suppose we keep the like of her round here?"

Shack didn't mind the profanity, though it was pointed. Plenty of lumberjacks had called him worse kinds of a fool. But he persisted. "She was here last night," he said.

The man snorted contemptuously and turned his back.

"Can you tell me where to find her?" Shack asked.

"If I can I won't. What you take me for?"

Shack was not too dense to perceive that he was misunderstood, that he was thought to meditate the young woman harm. Of course that was a monstrous mistake, and he hastened to say so, but all the response he got was an "Oho!" brought out in such a way that the loafers laughed in glee.

Very evidently his thief or any trace of her was not to be found there, and he could think of nothing else but to watch for her near the place where he had met her first. It was a thronged corner, at the edge of a public market, and pedlers and hucksters of many kinds, together with their countless customers, were there, jostling from morning till night but especially at night. Shack walked up and down, as he had walked before, and scanned the face of every woman he saw. There were women without number. Some of them were housewives of the poorer class, going with their baskets to buy, or coming away. Some were operatives in the nearby factories. Some were of the sort of her whom he was seeking. His understanding of what that sort was grew clearer, he had a notion of what it was that kept them roaming about the streets, he could identify them with the women of whom he had heard ribald lumberjacks and traders

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speaking. Sometimes these women would accost him, and ask him to go home with them; and when, in the face of his refusal, they persisted, he understood them well enough to be rid of them by saying he had no money.

He lodged that night in an empty shed down by the docks. Many a time he had lodged in a worse place. If his sleep was fitful and at length broken entirely, that wasn't because of the cheerless shed. It was because of his hunger. Before morning he was terribly hungry. He had eaten nothing all day, and even the vision, though he tried his best to occupy himself with the wolf at his vitals. The hours before dawn were long and dreary,—in the cold darkness it was hard to see the vision, and it all but slipped from him. Of course he remembered the barks and berries which he knew about, and just as soon as it was light enough, he went looking for them. There were two or three pitiful parks not far off, and he prowled through them in the gray dusk, searching minutely. But the trees and shrubs had nothing for him. He recognized but a single plant, a sickly oak, almost dead. For this he conceived a fellow feeling. He, too, with being out of his proper place, was sick almost unto death.

Still he kept up the hunt for his thief. That is to say, he kept on walking up and down, in the haunts of such persons, meeting women of her kind every little while, and never failing to look them in the face. With every spear of hay gone over, he was a step nearer the needle,—some such thought as that was behind his plodding persistence. Though the hunger was fierce, and a definite purpose was hard to

hold to, he hunted and hunted, for that purpose rooted deep, like an instinct.

As the day wore on there came over him a sense of his helplessness, of the futility of his unaided efforts. He thought of the police. Why not call on them? After all the police had their part in the reclamation of Jean Valjean. If Jean had not been arrested and dragged back, the sublime tragedy were incomplete,—the bishop's love would have failed of its telling demonstration and the sinner would have gone on in his sin. To be sure Shack didn't want his thief arrested,—it wasn't necessary to the tragedy now. But that could be explained to the police,—they could be made to see that all he needed was to find the young woman. Why shouldn't they help him? He was meeting policemen often, and at last he never met one without asking himself that question, with the sense of futility strengthening.

But there rose another difficulty,—even though his mind was made up to call on the police, he was a long time coming on just the right officer, one who did not by something, either look or word, repel him as he approached. Policemen were so apt to betray a certain coldness, or aloofness, in the manner of looking on the vice and squalor all about them as so much dead filth, to be scorned and done away with, but not worth wasting any sympathy on; Shack did not so finely discuss the matter with himself, but he felt the effect and was repelled. There was the right policeman at length, however,—an elderly person with a thick gray beard and a kindly eye, who conversed pleasantly with a wretched woman picking rags and with others as little deserving of consideration,—who had, in short, a mighty friendly and promising way with him.

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He shook his head, though, with a disconcerting twinkle in his kindly eye, when Shack came up to say that he was hunting for a young woman whom he had met but once and who had taken him home with her and robbed him of a sum of money. It was not his intention to speak of the money; but when he had told the rest, the policeman asked him, plumply, if she had stolen anything from him, and he had to answer. And very likely that part should be told, too,—the police could not be expected to move unless they had reason to believe a crime had been committed. The police in the greater tragedy never would have laid finger on Jean, to complete it, only that they were informed of the theft he was guilty of.

The officer's good will was not to be doubted, but he had only the coldest of cold comfort to give. "You'll never find her, my friend," he said. "She'll not show herself soon. Besides, if you should get her, you wouldn't get your money. That's all spent before now."

"I don't want the money," said Shack. He caught the quizzical look in the friendly face, saw that he was being misunderstood once more, and added, with emotion: "I want to forgive her, that's all!"

The officer smiled, as the man in the bar had done, though with less of a sneer. It was like him to be considerate, but a freak was a freak, and a joke was a joke.

"Strikes me you might forgive her without finding her, if that's all you're after," he said, giving Shack a playful nudge with his stick. "Anyway, you'll not see her again. She'll take good care about that. She won't be expecting to be forgiven,—it's not the usual thing in such cases."

“Can't you help me look for her?”

“Not if you're going to forgive her. That's not in our line. We'd be throwing our time away. We're not paid to forgive people.”

CHAPTER III

MANNA.

THREE days without food were almost enough to finish even an Indian, where he has none of his tonic barks, and no efficient belt to draw up, only the poor waistband of his trousers, its meager measure of relief soon spent. The evening of the third day sent Shack back to his shed worn out with tramping vainly, yet to wrestle all night with the ravening wolf at his vitals and never once to sleep. He was so tired that his legs fairly refused to hold him up longer, but right away he discovered that lying down made the gnawings worse, made them like knife-thrusts to wring a cry of agony from him, stoic though he was. So he compromised by sitting up with his back against the boards. That was better, but bad enough still. The gnawings tortured him terribly even when he sat up, and when he could endure them no longer he staggered to his feet,—for all the weariness he was most comfortable walking. It was as he walked, indeed, that he came nearest to falling asleep,—rather near, considering the circumstances. More than once he lost himself and went down on his knees and hands with a jolt and a renewal of the gnawings to wake him. He was about the miserablest child of the forest that ever lost his mother. That was the worst of it, to be

such a thorough child of the forest, yet lost in a great city. No child of the city lost in a great forest could be in a worse pickle.

There was strength left in him, though, as appeared, all at once, toward morning, when he lifted up his head, and snuffed the air, like a hound which detects an interesting scent, and on the instant, like a hound, bolted off at a quick, firm, confident pace. And a scent it was, enormously interesting, since it was the scent of food; he was making for it as any hungry animal might, with instinct in full control of him. He was famished down to the level of the beast, frankly obeying his instinct.

Have you ever happened near a great bakery just as they were opening the ovens and taking out the new bread? Unless you have you hardly know what a pleasant fragrance is thrown off. It is wonderfully pleasant, even though you are not hungry. Bakery bread is mostly poor stuff, to eat, but the smell of it, hot, is enough to put you in mind of the feasts of the gods.

And a feast set for the gods it might as well have been, for all the good it was to Shack. Reason would have told him so, in advance, and saved him the disappointment; but he was given up to instinct. The sweet savor, drawing him on in his instinctive, animal way, brought him presently to a brick wall, pierced with doors and windows but all shut to him. It was dark yet, only for the faint glimmer of dawn, and lights burned inside, and the windows looked like glaring, baleful eyes, while the bricks between frowned blackly. The hope that had held him up vanished and with it the strength it had gathered. He staggered back across the street, and sank, or fell, on

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the curb, and sat there, holding himself up with difficulty, staring dazedly at the mocking windows and the frowning bricks. Cruel! He had known the forest to be cruel, in his day, but never with such cruelty as this. He was fallen to the lowest ebb of his fortunes—nothing could be lower, not even death.

Only for a little, however, did the cruelty afflict him, for with the vanishing of hope and strength, he grew dumbly indifferent, like a sick ox. There comes a time when the gnawings of hunger cease, though starvation continues,—when the nerves refuse to be tortured further and the wolf takes himself off. Shack might sit there until he fell prostrate, and lie prostrate until he died, but he would suffer no more. His mind was pretty much a blank. The thief he sought was clean forgotten. His father's business was forgotten. To all intents and purposes he was already a dead man, only waiting to breathe his last.

But he was not destined to die, just yet, or even to fall prostrate. The drowsiness increased as the pain lessened, till he could no longer hold his head up; but he had sense enough, or instinct enough, to edge along the curb to a big mail-box and a post beside it, they two forming a corner where he might lean and doze. And while he dozed, crumpled down in an abject heap, daylight came stealing over the world. Or was it only the daylight of his dreams? Anyway, he seemed to see across the street, quite clearly, and to make out a line of men standing silently at one of the doors of the bakery. It was a singular thing for men to be standing there, silently waiting,—they were like ghosts, or dream-figures. And every little while a new ghost came up and joined the line, till it was too long to hold itself straight, and

doubled back upon itself, once, twice, thrice. There might be a hundred ghosts in line.

Then on a sudden a still more singular thing appeared to happen. The door was opened, from within, and a man stepped out. He was dressed all in white, with a funny square cap on his head, and he had a big basket piled full of loaves of bread. Owing to the denseness of the line, and the uncertain light, Shack did not at once see all that was taking place, but very visible to him was the stir among the ghosts, the pressing forward; and soon he made out that the man in white was handing each ghost a loaf from the basket. As the ghosts got their loaves they hurried off,—two or three came over Shack's way, and slunk past him, eating ravenously, by which they would look to be real, and the bread would look to be real. Hope sprang up afresh, and afresh it found strength, and instinct bade him rise once more. Others, be they ghosts or men, were joining the line, and a fear of being left out urged him. He ran over and took his place.

Before very long his turn came and he stood at the door. He trembled violently. What if it should turn out to be only a dream, after all? But no, the loaf was already in his hands, a good loaf and weighty. He halted, though there was pushing and jostling behind him,—his heart swelled with gratitude and he would have spoken. But his voice failed him,—he could only move his lips. Then the man in white, the ministering angel in his robes of purity, bade him step lively, and he had to go, without a word.

Grateful? It was manna in the desert, no less. It fed him doubly, not only his body but his soul; for as he ate, he was a thousand times more convinced of

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heaven's aid. He considered not how dry and old and slight of substance the bread was,—it was sweetened to him by the manner of its descent. Next morning he went again to the bakery, and every morning, and there was always a loaf for him. He never wore his welcome out.

And now that he was hungry no more, he remembered his father's business, and his thief.

Can you fancy the ardor with which he renewed his search, with the thought upon him that heaven gave him his daily bread, and by that directed him to be up and doing? On the ninth day he found her. The policeman had not prophesied truly though with knowledge; for she showed herself, and he found her,—and that, too, very near the spot where he had met her first. He knew her from afar, for the look of her was graven on his memory,—her natty little figure, her saucy face with its sparkling eyes, and the curls under a sailor hat set jauntily awry; he would know her among a million. At sight of her his heart leaped in his bosom, and he hurried forward. He was afraid, too, and had a feeling of weakness in his knees. For all the joy, it was a solemn thing which he was about to do, in some sense an awful thing,—awful, and great.

She was speaking with a man. Shack came up in time to hear him say, coarsely: "Not in a thousand years!" Then he turned on his heel and walked off, and the little woman looked very vexed, and it was in that posture that Shack met her, face to face.

For the fleetingest moment her countenance fell. Then straightway it hardened, brazenly, and she affected not to know him.

But Shack was not to be put off. "My friend,"

quoth he, huskily, and commanding his voice but hardly, "be not afraid. It is—I mean, I forgive you!"

The girl stared at him with parted lips and dilating eyes,—very evidently she was astonished. And that was as it should be. No doubt Jean Valjean had been astonished,—astonishment first, and after that the light of love.

"I forgive you the money—that is—I forgive—"

Somehow, it was a mighty difficult thing, now that he was trying it, to get himself into the sublime position of the good bishop. Somehow, his words fell flat, or failed altogether. And the thing he was doing, was it so great and solemn?

The girl's astonishment passed. And then the light of love? No, a peal of sardonic laughter.

"I mustn't be seen talking with a gentleman I was never introduced to," she protested, with a mocking shrug of her pretty shoulders. "It isn't considered respectable, don't you know."

And with that she tripped away, and was swallowed up in the throng.

CHAPTER IV

A GRINDER WHO IS GRIST

THOUGH the manna in the desert was so doubly a solace to him, Shack did not forever depend on the bakery. He became a grinder, and earned his keep with something besides. Paul had been a tentmaker, while in pursuit of his mission, but Shack was a grinder. There was the hand of heaven in it once more,—he couldn't help but see that; he was chosen a grinder, else things would never have taken the course they did.

When he went back to his shed that night, after finding his thief, a good deal cast down by his failure to save her and rather vainly trying to persuade himself that the heaven might still work within her and grace bear fruit at length,—when he came back, thus, his corner was already occupied by a black little man who lay groaning dismally and proclaiming himself desperately sick. He was calling for help and Shack, hearing that, instantly forgot all else. The man wanted water most,—he was burning with thirst and his cup was empty though it was a large cup and he had been careful to fill it before he lay down. So much he made known in snatches of broken English, mingled with groans and outcries, and besought Shack for the love of the Blessed Virgin to fetch him something to drink. Shack did that, and more,—fetched

water to drink and water to dabble on the throbbing temples and to bathe the heaving breast with, cold water from a deep well though he had to run the better part of a mile to get such. But in spite of all the man grew worse very fast. He raved a little, and then a little more, till he was raving all the time; but before he quite lost himself he told Shack his name was Beppo and his hour was come,—there was a matter with his inside, he declared, and he could not live beyond a few hours. In his delirium he prayed incessantly, in outlandish gibberish, invoking the Virgin and every saint whose name his memory would yield. Shack stood by him faithfully, all night long, doing what he could with the cold water and gentle rubbing.

The delirium passed after a while. By morning Beppo felt better, left off his praying more and more, and swore some, using about the same names. But he was weak,—he had barely strength to raise himself on his elbow. His legs were quite useless. Several times, at his earnest solicitation, Shack lifted him and stood him on his feet, but it was to no avail,—the legs absolutely refused to hold him up. Beppo was mightily displeased. He swore till he was out of breath and then lay glowering and muttering. He had an ugly face when he scowled.

“You go Poo Commis?” he broke out, after a little.

Shack would do anything, go anywhere. What was the Poo Commis?

“Here!” With much fumbling and groaning, Beppo fished a scrap of soiled paper out of his pocket. “Poo Commis here,” he pointed to one side of the paper. “Medicine here,” he pointed to the other. “Go like hell! I hurt.”

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Shack understood sufficiently and went, with all his Indian swiftness. He showed the paper to several whom he met and was sent on his way without once going amiss, to the Poor Commission, or Bureau of Public Charities. It was a woeful place, a veritable slough of despond, where want, driven desperate, came to find relief without a touch of sympathy. There were gathered the hungry and the sick, but more especially the sick, to receive their dole, and a chill lay upon them,—Shack felt it the moment he set foot inside the door.

The clerks looked at his paper and sent him hither and yon, until he had climbed all the stairs in the building, which he didn't mind, and lost much time, which he minded very much, thinking of Beppo suffering so. They had cold, distant eyes, those clerks, and the chill grew on him as he passed from one to another. At last a very young man with glasses led the way down into the basement, where there were multitudes of jars and mysterious gear of many kinds.

"Hello, Bill! Wie geht's?" he called out to a still younger man, who was busy at a table.

"Ganz gut, Henry!" Bill called back.

They were a cheerful pair and not content with the exchange of genial greetings they cracked some jokes. It was some minutes before Shack's business got any attention.

"By the way," remarked Henry, "that dago has sent in his prescription for more dope. Might as well make him up a little, though nothing'll save him. His kidneys are all to the bad. I told him he couldn't live a month, the last time he was here. He said then he was going down to some shrine in Canada, Ste. Anne de Something, and get himself healed. He must

have changed his mind or else the old girl couldn't see him."

That led to some more jokes being cracked, after which Henry strolled back upstairs, while Bill went on with his work, putting up medicines. He was horribly slow. Shack, waiting in an agony of impatience, could hear Beppo groan and see him writhe as the pain came on him, and it was almost more than he could bear. He reflected on what he had heard about Beppo's kidneys, which conveyed no very definite idea to him, and about the poor little man's not living a month, which conveyed an idea all too definite,—he might be dying even now, and for the want of the medicine,—why couldn't they hurry? Something very like indignation rose in Shack's breast, but he dared not give it voice,—it had never been permitted him to be indignant. All he could do was to choke over it, and at last burst into tears, whereupon Bill was amused, asked what the drizzling was all about, and chuckled to himself. After what seemed an interminably long while, the chemist completed a package and laid it out, and Shack sprang to take it, thinking it his. But no, it wasn't, and he was sharply told to wait. Another package was similarly completed and laid out. His? No. Bill scowled at him, and worked slower than ever, if such a thing were possible,—worked as if he delighted in torturing the impatient boy who stood quivering and biting his nails. Three, four, five packages! Shack's was the seventh. He got it after waiting an hour, and darted away with it, like the wind.

But now, when he was back at last, Beppo wouldn't touch the medicine,—wouldn't even look at it. He was plainly much worse, and very bad. His face was

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ghastly sunken, the mark of death was already set there. His bodily pain was lost in the numbness of approaching dissolution, but now he was frantic with the agony of the soul.

"The priest!" he cried out, the moment Shack appeared beside him. "Go! Like hell! No, no, Holy Mother, I mean not that! But go!"

Where? No matter! The nearest church! Any priest! Beppo fairly shrieked in his excitement.

Shack was off again, bolt from the bow, but uncertainly, running at random, with no paper to show and no notion to guide him. What little his experience had taught him about churches was swept away in the tumult of his emotions, but somehow, when there rose before him a stone pile, with a lofty tower, instinct or what not told him it was what he sought. He plunged up to the front door, and beat upon it frantically. He might as well beat a rock for all the effect he had. He hurled himself against it, and no rock ever stood firmer. No entering there! But a little at one side there was a lesser door, and when he flew at that, never stopping to knock, it crashed in with him, and he brought up in the very midst of a little study, where a man sat by the table, writing. The man was old, and severe of aspect, and he was startled and offended.

"This is a private room!" he snarled. "Why do you come in here in such a fashion?"

Shack had time and breath for but one question: Was he a priest?

"I am not!" said the man, sourly.

Shack began to whimper, he was so wrought up. "Beppo is dying and he asks for a priest!" he cried.

The man was softened a little. "There's a Romish

establishment just below, I believe. I daresay you will find a priest there," he said, more graciously.

Shack didn't stop to ask which way was below,—he tumbled out with as small ceremony as he had tumbled in, and ran, the right way as luck would have it, and in a moment was confronted with another churchly pile of stone. But here, aloft over the tower, there glittered a gilt cross, and that meant something to Shack. There had always been a cross, though far less showy, over the chapel by the reservation, and about that chapel there was always a priest to be found. Sectarian distinctions, the quality which differentiated a priest from another clergyman, such things would be little thought of at any time and least of all just now, yet Shack, eagerly absorbed in his quest, was cheered to see the cross aloft,—it was a sign of hope to him for the moment at least. And then, almost in the same instant, his eye lighted on a figure in cap and gown, precisely the sort Father James used to wear, and Father Xavier. By every token, here was a priest,—that was the glad thought which surged up in him. It was a glad thought, indeed, and in the rush of his gladness he forgot everything but his errand,—bolted up behind the man of God, caught him rudely by his cassock, and blurted out:

"Beppo is dying!"

The priest confronted him with a frown. "Nevertheless you should have better manners!" he grumbled; and though he did not delay to answer the call, stopping only to change his coat, he was visibly out of temper, the more so as Shack led him a hot pace, and he was stout and wheezy. On the way to the shed he muttered maledictions, or what sounded like

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nothing else, but once there, the presence of death, so near and so evident, recalled him to his office.

"Well, my friend?" he said, bending benignly over the sick man.

Beppo answered with a torrent of gibberish, but the priest seemed to follow him. "Leave us alone," he said, to Shack, and Shack went outside and sat down on a pile of boards, dazed and perplexed.

He could hear Beppo and the priest, the sound of their voices, though not their words. With his sensitive ear, and the sensitive soul behind it, he caught the note of penitence on the one hand, and the note of mild reproof mingled with indulgence, on the other. He did not call these things by name, but he knew very well that Beppo was sorely accusing himself, and the priest was offering him comfort, and bringing it, too, for presently the note in Beppo's voice changed,—the terror was gone and in its stead there was confidence, and peace. Shack listened in awe to Beppo cooing softly, like a child that falls asleep.

Then the priest called to him to come back, and he went in. Beppo lay with his eyes fixed on a small cross, babbling like a drowsy baby, contentedly, without a trace of anxiety. The sight of that little cross stirred Shack's memory afresh. Father James had just such a cross, and Father Xavier. It was the only really pretty thing they carried with them; their robes were hideous, but the little cross was very pretty. Anyway, Shack always considered it so. There was the figure of a naked man carved on it, and that struck him especially,—he had often speculated, in his vacant, aimless fashion, about that naked man. He was speculating now. He was wool-gathering when the priest

bade him kneel down, and did not at once comprehend, and the command had to be repeated:

“Kneel! You are in the presence of God!”

Shack's legs gave way under him all at once, and down he went, nearly prostrate. The priest opened a leather case which hung from a ribbon round his neck, and took out a bit of something which he put in Beppo's mouth, after making some curious motions. Curious, but were they unfamiliar? And the words which the priest mumbled, were they unfamiliar, even though meaningless?

“Corp—Dom—nostri—custodiat animam—eternam—”

It was Father James's singsong all over again. And that which the priest put in Beppo's mouth, what could it be but some of the dry, hard, sour bread which Shack remembered so well? Had he not suffered the missionary to put a piece of it in his own mouth once? Only once, though, because he didn't fancy it in the least. He would have spat it out, so little did he fancy it, only that he had been warned of the fearfulest consequences to ensue if he should.

Why, then, should Beppo fancy it so hugely? He took it eagerly, with a lighting up of his eyes; and when he had swallowed it, he lay back perfectly at his ease,—gently drowsing, cooing softly, like nothing so much as a baby just fed. Nobody could better seem to fancy a thing than Beppo seemed to fancy that bit of hard bread.

The priest stood up and put on his hat, but Shack remained kneeling, raptly. The spectacle of death robbed of all its terrors, of death the near brother of sleep,—so much of the reality he saw; the rest was fallen quite away,—the squalid shed and all the

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squalid city round about. With Beppo dying he was back among the pines, in the silence and solitude, absorbed in contemplation. The priest laid a hand on his shoulder, and not lightly,—many a time he had jumped for less. But he did not jump, or raise his head even, or respond in any way. It took considerable of a shake to make him look up, and when he looked up it was without understanding,—he was still far afield.

The priest wished to leave some directions.

“I am going to notify the authorities,” he said, “and request them to remove this man to a proper place. Do you stay till they come.”

No need to bid Shack to stay,—he was all but rooted to the spot. He was still kneeling when Beppo at length turned his head and feebly beckoned him to draw nearer, and kneeling he made his way over, in a hobbling manner. But by that his dream was broken up, the reality came back, every fiber of human pity in him was touched, and he wept, bowing his head to the very ground.

“You cry?” exclaimed Beppo, astonished. “Why you cry? You not my people! Why you cry?”

Not for Shack to fathom his emotions,—they were to him as the wind which bloweth where it listeth; he knew the effect thereof, but none so ignorant as he of their origins. Perhaps Beppo was mistaken in deeming those copious tears altogether a sign of sorrow, but what else are tears a sign of commonly? At all events, he was profoundly touched and pleased. He stretched out his failing hand and laid it on Shack’s bowed head, and he caressed the brown curls fondly. His countenance beamed with joy and was almost beautiful.

"I gif it you!" he said. "I gif you it!"

Shack was deaf, and Beppo had to pull his hair impatiently before he would give heed.

"Go bring!" commanded the sick man, and pointed over to a dark corner of the shed.

The habit of obedience was strong, and Shack went. And that which he was to bring was a grinder's wheel. He found it, where Beppo had concealed it before lying down,—to sleep as he supposed, to die as the event proved. It was quite an elaborate contrivance, furnished with a peal of little silvery bells which rang as the wheel moved. They were merry bells, and Beppo's eyes danced at the sound of them.

"I gif you it!" he repeated, and laughed aloud, out of sheer good feeling.

Shack's tears flowed afresh,—he understood or felt, at least, the solemn pathos of the gift.

"You will use it yourself," he protested. "You will be well."

"No, I go," said Beppo, laughing still, and then he lay back and closed his eyes, and prayed, cooingly, drowsily, contentedly.

And he went, very presently, with the light of perfect hope in his dark face, like a baby falling asleep. And Shack, sunk down in the litter, poured out his tears in a flood.

Those authorities were some time coming, and when they came Beppo was dead, and Shack had had his cry out,—he was sitting quietly by, like a stoical Indian, or a dog. They brought an ambulance, first, but it was too late for that, and they went away, with considerable grumbling over the unnecessary trouble they had taken, and came again, with a very ordinary wagon and a cheap coffin, into which they tumbled

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Beppo and carried him off. Shack would have followed, like a dog, because instinct bade him do so, but they didn't ask him to ride, and they whipped up and drove off so fast that he couldn't keep in sight of them, good runner though he was. He did his utmost, however, and gave up with a great, quivering sigh, and went back to the shed, and his wheel, which he had forgotten.

That was how he became a grinder.

It was a sufficiently apostolic calling,—as good as tent-making, possibly better; it brought him in contact with many men of many kinds, whereas tent-making was a secluded business. Paul, making tents, was no doubt cooped up in some loft, but Shack, grinding knives and scissors, was very much in and of the world.

A passably lucrative calling, too. There were days when he would earn as much as fifty cents,—those were the red-letter days. It wasn't so much that fifty cents meant plenty to eat for himself, because ten cents meant that; the beauty of fifty cents, whereby the day of its earning became signal, lay in the fact that it meant plenty to eat for so many others besides,—four or five, at least.

Whatsoever he earned, be it much or little, he spent that day, and sun of the morrow always found him penniless; and all beyond a meager fraction went for the behoof of the less fortunate. Besides the ten cents which his food cost he reserved nothing to himself except when it was very cold,—then he hired a lodging of the cheapest sort, costing another ten cents. Some days, for grinders have their ups and downs, he earned nothing; then he ate nothing, and if it was too

cold to sleep in the shed, he would walk the streets all night.

His home was in the slums, with the poorest and wretchedest and worst, and there he got to be well known. His familiars always called him "the parson." That was the name he went by, down there,—strangely, since he never spoke of religion or even professed to be religious.

He was known outside the slums, too. With the respectable people to whom he looked for patronage, he enjoyed some distinction,—he was such a grinder of grinders. Certain women, more than a few, would have nobody else sharpen their scissors, if they could get Shack,—they would wait for him, putting themselves to inconvenience. That was partly because he did good work, what with his native deftness and his wish to master the art; but there was more especially his charming manner, so gentle, and genuine, and calculated to please women. Then, too, he was undeniably a handsome grinder. In another business, where handsome men were commoner, his beauty might not strike you so forcibly, but for a grinder he was truly beautiful, with his clustering brown hair, and his pale, refined face, and his lustrous, smoldering eyes. Often women would find themselves not too busy to stand beside him while he ground their scissors, and talk with him, as if they enjoyed his company and conversation, as why should they not?

CHAPTER V

NOT WELCOME

It was to his being a grinder, of so distinguished a sort, that Shack owed his remarkable encounter with the bishop. If he hadn't been a grinder, he would hardly have made the acquaintance of Nora, the bishop's pretty Irish housemaid; and if he had been an ordinary grinder, like Beppo in his day, Nora wouldn't have kept all her scissors for him, and got him in the way of visiting the bishop's house regularly. Nor would she have been standing with him by the kitchen door, that day, to tell him who the bishop was.

Shack didn't know in the least until then. He was grinding away, and Nora was chattering away, when a wonderful grand carriage drew up at the front door, and a personage clad in the most wonderful bright robes got out and went in. Shack were no Indian not to be affected by bright colors, and so struck was he now that he let his wheel stop while he gave himself up to frank admiration.

Who was the personage? Shack asked Nora that, and Nora replied, why, it was his lordship.

"His lordship!" repeated Shack, not much informed.

"The bishop, of course!" said Nora, laughing at his ignorance. "This is the bishop's palace. Didn't you know that?"

No, he didn't know that.

Nora had other fish to fry, as the saying is, and fish which interested her more, and she prattled on, vivaciously; but Shack had lost his ears. He paid no attention to her whatever. She pouted, plainly signifying that she was on the edge of being displeased, if not already over; and at length, his neglect being too much to bear, she flounced into the house, and left him alone. In a little while, relenting somewhat, she peeped out, and he was nowhere to be seen. Her scissors, a delicate pair which she used to trim her pretty nails with, lay on the step, only half ground.

Shack was gone. He had slung his wheel over his shoulder, to keep the peals from ringing, and made off to his shed. There he put the wheel away, and took out his worn and tattered *Les Misérables*, to read.

Bishop?

Well, one thing was very clear,—Bishop Welcome rode in no such carriage and dwelt in no such palace. On the contrary, he walked, or rode a very poor donkey, and he dwelt in a hovel. This hovel, by the way, had been the diocesan hospital, when Monsignor Welcome ascended to the episcopacy; but the first thing he did was to order the sick people removed to the fine building which had been the bishop's palace hitherto, and that henceforth was the hospital, while he went to live in the old hospital, which henceforth was the episcopal residence. It was there he entertained Jean Valjean, forgave him, shot the light of love into his darkened soul. What had palaces and grand carriages to do with the proper business of a bishop, anyway?

Shack read until the light of day failed. When it was too dark to make out the words, he went forth into the streets, to walk about, and make up his mind.

It was the slums, his home, the haunts where he was no stranger. Many spoke to him, both men and women. There was in particular a woman, of the kind of his thief,—anyway, you would naturally set her down to be that, and probably make no mistake. She had the jaunty, reckless bearing, and the brassy face.

Her name was Sadie. That was what Shack called her, when she accosted him.

"Seems to me you don't look very well, to-night, Sadie," he said.

"I'm sick enough to croak, right now," she answered, the jauntiness melting into a woeful look under the touch of sympathy. "I guess I'm about all in, parson."

Why had she come out then?

The girl laughed, at the question. "Out!" she repeated, bitterly. "I'm already out. I can't go in till I make the price!"

"If I get you a good room, will you go there and rest?" he asked.

Sadie laughed once more. "Try me!" she said, and her bitter, sullen laughter made out that she wasn't expecting favors.

They were a curious pair, walking on together, and they didn't escape comment. Nor was the comment considerate or much restrained. Yet it was not ill meant,—bums and wantons made broad remarks, but you could see it was mostly chaff, their poor manner of good-humored raillery. Shack took it in good part, but Sadie's dejection grew on her with every sally. The forced professional simper had fled her countenance at once, and her mouth drooped more and more dismally, with a quiver about the lips to show that it wouldn't take much to make her cry.

"What do you mind me for, parson?" she suddenly broke out.

"Because you're a friend of mine, of course," Shack replied. "Anybody likes to do his friends a good turn."

She flared up hotly: "Not by a damnsight! You're the only one I ever met up with and that's because you're simple. If the likes of me was to fall down on the street for being too sick to stand up, they'd kick me out of the way and that's all. If I was to die right here and now they'd bury me in a sand-bank somewhere, just to get me out of their way!"

"Oh, you don't mean that, Sadie!" Shack protested, soothingly.

"Parson, you're a damn fool!" the girl snapped, but with that the flood broke, and she wept noisily. "God! it's a damp night," a hoodlum called out, in derision, but Sadie only gave herself up the more to her emotions. A patrolman passed by, with a nod and a smile. He understood Sadie's lamentations,—they called for no interference on his part.

Shack took her to a lodging-house visibly cleaner and brighter than the most and emptied his pockets to hire the best room for her. She had spent the fury of her grief, by that time, and was snivelling out its last gusty remnants.

"Good-night, Sadie!" he said. "Stay in bed twenty-four hours and it'll make a new girl of you."

"A new girl, back to the old life! What's the use?" she whimpered, but he didn't stop to parley further. He gave her another cheery good-night and left her.

He had gone but a short way when he was held up by a hulk of a man, who was bloated with drink and so near the snakes that he shook like one palsied.

"Hullo, parson!" this fellow bawled, with maudlin cordiality. "You're the chap I'm looking for. Give me the price of a drink!"

"Not a cent left, to-night, Gus," said Shack.

"You lie!" shouted the inebriate, angrily. "Because I want it for booze, you won't give it to me!" But at once his manner changed wholly, and he begged abjectly: "Please, parson! A drink will take me out of hell."

"If I get a drink for you, will you go home with me, then?"

"God, yes! Anything you say. I'm burning up!"

There was a groggery at hand,—there was always a groggery at hand, in those regions. They stepped into it.

"Will you give this man a drink, if I promise to pay you with the first money I earn?" Shack asked the barkeep.

That functionary made no reply except to jerk his thumb toward a sign on the wall: "In God we trust. All others cash!" Gus was instantly on fire with indignation, poured out a torrent of profane protest and abuse, and avowed his more than readiness to fight any semblance of a man who should dare question the parson's word, or intimate a doubt of his engagements being scrupulously kept. But the barkeep was unmoved, and Shack pulled his turbulent companion out and away.

"I'll knock the block off anybody that insults you!" blustered the man, and cried that he had all hell inside of him, for God's sake get him a drop of something!

They tried three other groggeries, only to fail, but with the fourth they succeeded. The proprietor of the place happened to be behind the bar, and he was willing to take Shack's pledge,—a sale was a sale, the

price was nearly all profit, and he knew the risk was next to nothing. A great slug of what passed for whiskey, a fiery draught, was forthcoming, and Gus put it down with a look of unspeakable relief. He was steadier, too, forthwith; the palsy vanished and his eyes, though puffed and bloodshot, shone with graterful visions than green rabbits and such like,—he was out of his hell, for the moment.

He went, more willessly than willingly, when Shack took him by the arm to lead him, and together they threaded the streets down to the shed by the docks. There was need to hurry, too,—the vile liquor would not long leave Gus the use of his legs. Its stupefying, numbing effects began almost at once to be visible and by the time they reached their destination the man could hardly raise his feet from the ground and the moment they halted at last he went down in a helpless heap,—unconscious and snoring.

He lay a long time so,—until broad day. Shack sat beside him, reading, when he opened his eyes.

"Hullo, parson, damn you!" he said, thickly, as soon as his fogged intellect found itself a little.

"Hullo, Gus," rejoined Shack. "How do you feel?"

"No matter," was the drunkard's testy retort. "That's my business. What I want to know is why you take so much trouble for me. I'm a hell of a feller!"

Shack vouchsafed no reply to that sentiment.

"I wonder if you're damn fool enough to buy me another drink, parson?"

"Maybe. Still I thought you might want to go to work, this morning. Can't I help you about that, Gus?"

"Work! You know a damn sight better. I don't

want to go to work. Why don't you come right out with it, parson? You want me to go to work and by God, I'm going. I wouldn't do it for another soul but you,—so help God I wouldn't!"

The man was a sailor, and for such as he there was no lack of employment during the season of navigation. Because, being sailors, they were bound to jump their jobs at every port, one or two or three from every vessel, there was always to be found a captain short of hands. Before noon Gus was aboard, and at work.

And now Shack turned to affairs more especially his own. He repaired to the bishop's. With the bishop, to-day, he had business.

He marched up to the front door and rang the bell, and it was Nora who answered. She had not forgotten his rudeness of the day before, and the scissors half ground,—though she was surprised to see him there, she could bethink her to give him a very haughty look.

"Nothing to-day," she said, and added, with crushing asperity: "You are to come to the back door, always!"

Shack looked at her, and saw her not; there was no Nora in the world, for him, any more.

"I wish to speak with the bishop," he said.

Nora flushed,—it is a species of insult where a man declines to be affected by the displeasure which a woman is at such pains to advertise; no doubt she could with good heart have shut the door in his face, and would have done so only that she was there to let people in and not to keep them out. Still she had her arrow left, and she let it fly.

"The chancellor isn't in, but you may wait for him," she said.

"The chancellor!" repeated Shack, doubtfully.

"He looks after matters which are not so important, you know," said Nora, bitingly.

And even by that Shack was not affected,—not as she would have him, at least. He gave no sign whatever of being hurt in his feelings. However, he shook his head, decidedly.

"It is the bishop I wish to speak with," quoth he.

Nora bit her lip. Could anything be more provoking? "I don't suppose his lordship will care to see you!" she snapped, and then, frightened at herself, she hastened to bid Shack in,—she would tell the bishop he was there.

She led up through a gloomy corridor to a great cold room hung with strange pictures, of men in gorgeous robes and women with glowing rings round their heads. She did not ask him to have a chair,—though her volatile anger was gone almost at once and she darted him a bright glance which plainly meant forgiveness and conciliation, he had no such glance to give her back, and so, with a proud curl of her lip, she left him to stand and wait.

The bishop was a long time coming. Not inconceivably the offended housemaid, with all she had endured, managed to intimate to his lordship that the person was of no importance; but whether or no, it was near half an hour that Shack was kept standing. He did not once move. On the very square of carpet where Nora had left him, the bishop found him.

A lordly figure the bishop was, rustling in his long robes, doubly impressive in his own house, with all the proper settings. They were much brighter robes than he had worn in his coach, with more purple in them,—a great deal, in fact; and nothing could be more effective, in the cold and quiet of the great room,

than this purple. Shack drank in the brave sight and his eyes glowed,—he was near forgetting himself, so strong was the appeal to the Indian. Not till the bishop spoke, asking, not unpleasantly, what he could do for him, was he reminded of his high purpose.

Thereupon ensued a colloquy, the like of which probably never was before, between a bishop and a grinder. His lordship was greatly astonished, though he did not know his visitor for a grinder, and you would be even more so, since you are better acquainted with the fellow,—at his language, especially, the phrases thereof gropingly derived from Dr. Robert's books and rudely adapted, by laborious conning and without being any too well understood, to the expression of thoughts all out of joint with accepted notions.

Grinder: "You are a bishop?"

Bishop: "In my unworthy way, yes."

Grinder: "Then why do you live in this costly palace and ride in that costly coach and wear those costly robes?"

Bishop (graciously, after a moment's hesitation): "It is customary for one in my station, I believe. These things are prescribed by custom."

Grinder: "Jesus did not live in a palace or ride in a coach?"

Bishop: "No, that is true."

Grinder: "You are commanded to follow him?"

Bishop (with a smile and a shrug): "All men are so commanded. No man does that thing. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak."

Grinder: "Would you have all men follow Jesus—to do as Jesus did?"

Bishop: "By all means. Wouldn't you?"

Grinder: "No, because if all men were to follow

Jesus, the race would perish. If all men were to crucify the carnal self, as he did, the race would perish from the earth, I tell you!"

Bishop (casting up his eyes): "To dwell forevermore in heaven!"

Grinder (perplexed and shifting): "Why don't you marry?"

Bishop: "I am forbidden to marry."

Grinder: "Who forbids you?"

Bishop: "Holy Mother Church."

Grinder: "Holy Mother Church doesn't forbid all men to marry?"

Bishop: "On the contrary. Marriage is a blessed relation highly commended to the faithful."

Grinder: "If it is a blessed relation for others, why not for you?"

Bishop: "St. Paul says that he who is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please God. But he who is married is solicitous about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and he is divided."

Grinder (eagerly): "Is it not expected of you that you will follow Jesus more nearly than other men?"

Bishop (shrugging): "Ah, doubtless. An expectation all too often disappointed. In our poor, human way, we of the clergy try to show men how to live."

Grinder: "You follow Jesus, with the hope that men will follow you?"

Bishop. "As we are worthy, and worthily exemplify the divine pattern."

Grinder: "When you do not marry you follow Jesus, yet you don't wish men to follow you?"

Bishop (with a touch of weariness): "I have already explained why the clergy do not marry."

Grinder (perplexed, fumbling over a book which he has drawn from his pocket): "You have heard of St. Francis?"

Bishop (smiling indulgently): "Of Assisi? Oh, yes, indeed!"

Grinder: "He was a clergyman?"

Bishop: "He was."

Grinder: "He had power over men, to bend their wills?"

Bishop: "That is a fact of history, I believe. He was a very wonderful man."

Grinder: "In what was he wonderful?"

Bishop: "In his power, which you mention."

Grinder: "How did he come by his power?"

Bishop: "By his spirituality, no doubt."

Grinder: "What is spirituality?"

Bishop: "Briefly, unworldliness. Holy elevation of soul. Disassociation from carnal promptings."

Grinder (glowing, yet perplexed): "The proof of this—the proof of spirituality is—is——"

Bishop: "In a word, sacrifice. The proof and the fruit of spirituality is sacrifice."

Grinder (after a pause): "Could you do your appointed work better if you had the power of St. Francis?"

Bishop: "That goes without saying."

Grinder (impatiently, almost in the tone of rebuke): "Then why don't you get it? Why don't you prove to the world your holy elevation of soul?"

Bishop (amused): "How—for instance?"

Grinder: "Well, you might put away your palace and your coach, as Bishop Welcome did."

Bishop (surprised): "Welcome? Who is he? I seem never to have heard of that bishop."

Grinder (fumbles over his book and at length reads

from it, in a halting manner): “‘If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brother, and sister, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.’ Who said that?”

Bishop (bowing his head): “Our blessed Redeemer!”

Grinder: “He would have His disciples to be very spiritual?”

Bishop: “Very!”

Grinder: “He bids His disciples crucify and deny the promptings, the—the—the things which get the race perpetuated——”

Bishop: “I see your difficulty, my friend. You take the word hate too literally. You should take it with a reservation,—in a figurative sense. The law of Christ does not permit us to hate even our enemies, much less our parents or our children. The meaning of the text is that we must be in such a disposition of soul as to be willing to renounce and part with everything, how near and dear soever it may be to us, that would keep us from following Christ.”

Grinder (with sudden energy): “No! I say No! It is more. It is only you,—it is only the clergy who are told to do so. Not common men. No, no! You are to do what Jesus bids you. If you put away wife and children and father and mother is it not sacrifice, the proof of your holy elevation of soul? Why do you talk yourself out of it? Why do you—why do you—why do you——”

Bishop (much amused): “Well, well! You are a doctor of divinity, then? Tell me, doctor, to what profit should the minister do that which mankind at large are not expected to do?”

Grinder (greatly excited): “What did it profit St.

Francis? It gave him his power over men, to bend their wills. You say it is so,—his power is from his spirituality,—his spirituality is proved by sacrifice. Listen to me! We shall now speak of Bishop Welcome. He, too, had the spirituality, the holy elevation of soul. To what end? A vast influence for good flowed out from him,—all who came near him were made better by it. Did he preach? Did he scold? No, rather by the spirit did he lay hold of them, and lift them up in spite of themselves. He put love in their hearts, out of his own heart,—good will,—God's will,—I tell you God's will and good will are one. No matter how good will gets in a man's heart, it is God's will. Especially Jean Valjean, who was a frightful sinner, yet was saved. I will read of him." (He draws another volume from his pocket).

Bishop (shortly): "What book have you there?"

Grinder: "It is *Les Misérables*, the greatest book in the world, the word of God from the mouth of his prophet, greater than the Bible, for without it I should never have known what the Bible meant."

Bishop (shocked): "It is by the wicked Frenchman, Hugo?"

Grinder: "Hugo is his name."

Bishop: "I cannot hear you read from that book. All the books of that wicked man are proscribed. The faithful are forbidden to read them, or hear them read. They are impious and subversive of morals, and Holy Mother Church has put them on the Index."

Grinder: "The Index?"

Bishop (severely): "I have given you too much of my time,—a great deal more than I should have given

had I known what you came for." (rises) "I bid you good-day." (leads the way to the door)

Grinder (following reluctantly): "My father's business——"

Bishop: "No more! I must decline to let you waste another moment of the time which belongs to those who need my services."

That was the colloquy.

Nora was peeping out from the back door, when Shack took his departure. Her resentment was wholly evaporated and what was more, she was about dying of curiosity. She smiled at him, and even beckoned with her hand, and he was looking directly at her; but he did not heed her. For a moment he stood, with bared head, undecided, staring up at the cold, still windows; and then he turned abruptly and hurried off, with his hat in one hand and his tattered books in the other.

CHAPTER VI.

FISHERS OF MEN

IF sheep looked up and were not fed, it was from no lack of those who called themselves shepherds. There were shepherds and shepherds, until they fairly jostled one another, though the pastures were broad.

For some of these Shack came to have a fellow feeling.

He began with driving his wheel seven days in the week, knowing no reason why he should not. But very soon he discovered that he was eyed askance when he tinkled his bells of a Sunday and that patronage was very scantily forthcoming on that day. And at length he was warned by the police that it was against the law to carry on a gainful pursuit on the Sabbath. So he labored six days and did all his work, resting on the seventh, if mere emptiness of occupation could be called rest.

Once, strolling aimlessly about, he happened near a church when the people were going in. They were a throng, it was easy to drift along with them, and almost before he knew it he was going in, too. The experience proved pleasant enough. There was an abundance of color in the place, what with all the bright gowns of the women,—not so bright as the bishop's, but very engaging still, to the savage taste,—and the walls and windows painted and gilded. The

music, also, floated down from a high loft in an entrancing manner, and there was no escaping the thrill when the deep notes of the organ shook the air like thunder. The sermon,—well, Shack slept during much of it, and even when he wasn't sleeping, he dreamed; the sermon was likewise a joy, in its own way. The pastor came down to the door after the service, and shook hands with everybody, not by any means overlooking the stranger. Shack was considerably attracted and went back to that church several times.

But the shepherds whom he felt drawn to most were of another kind,—Melchisedecs rather than Levites, ministers who ministered in the by-ways and hedges, and had no churches. They were especially to be found down in the dingy district where cheap lodging-houses abounded. There they harangued from the gutter as often as a knot of listeners would gather on the curb, and that was often, for Sunday was a dull day in those regions,—so dull, what with the saloons all being shut, that even preaching, and poor preaching at that, was a consolation. If Shack didn't care much for the haranguing, there was still their devotion to make him like them. Certainly they were devoted. They worked all the week at some secular employment, usually of a toilsome character and not very remunerative, yet gave their day of rest freely and without price to the Master's service, as they were pleased to term it,—and a laborious service they made of it, too.

Among them was a certain carpenter with whom Shack struck up a friendship,—was not Jesus himself a carpenter? Neither of them knew the other's name,—never thought to ask it, though they were often together; and yet they were very good friends, of a kind. Their acquaintance began with the carpenter

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trying to save Shack's soul. He saw the boy in his little congregation of listeners, one Sunday evening, and when he had finished his discourse, he went to him, and laid his arm lovingly about his shoulders.

"Friend," said he, "something in your face tells me you wish to be born again."

No, that was a mistake. Shack had no notion of being born again,—once was amply enough for him.

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," insisted the carpenter. "Except a man be born of the water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

But his seed fell on stony places,—he was going on to enlarge upon his doctrine of regeneration when Shack broke in, impatiently.

"What makes you talk so much?" he asked.

"I preach the gospel," replied the carpenter. "I am commanded to go forth and preach."

"Who commands you?"

"The Master, my Lord and my Redeemer, Jesus the Christ!"

"No, he commands whoever would be his disciple to take up his cross daily."

"I try to do that, too, but it is not enough. The——"

"It is enough, if you do enough of it. Bishop Welcome——"

But now it was Shack's seed which fell on stony places,—he was going on, in a great glow, when the carpenter took his turn at breaking in.

"While ye have light, believe in the light!" he exclaimed. "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

And no nearer together could they come, though

the carpenter was forever trying to show Shack, and Shack was forever trying to show the carpenter. Often they would afford the bystanders considerable amusement, by their zeal, with neither in the least heeding the other.

Not much like the gentle carpenter was an evangelist who boasted himself a reformed tough, a coarse, heavy fellow, who in much still acted his old part, however his heart might have changed. He had thick black brows, and a mustache which fell over his chin, and a fierce eye and a scar across his cheek to testify to a stab he had got in a drunken row, sometime. In one way or another he had provided himself with a handsome wagon, carrying an organ and a choir of singers, so that wherever he set up to preach he had the churchly essentials. He was vulgar and boisterous. To draw himself a crowd he would resort to showman's tricks, among them that of pounding on an enormous gong till people ran up to see what was the matter. Having got his crowd, by hook or by crook, he would tell stories, not over nice but with some sort of a moral, and display coarse crayon pictures, such as he had a knack for drawing,—there was a moral to them, also. But whatever the failings of the evangelist, his singers were very delightful indeed. There were four voices, and they blended like currents of sweet water. It was when a certain two of them sang that the music was loveliest, however. Nothing could be lovelier, to Shack's notion, than when they sang a song which began with the words, "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour!"

There was an appeal in that. The first time he heard them sing it he chanced to be standing very near the wagon, within arm's reach, in fact. He was transported, and when he came to a consciousness of him-

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self, he was clinging to the wheel with both hands, something as the sinner in the allegory clings to the Rock of Ages, with his face upturned and wet. The evangelist saw him, and reached down to take hold of him, but Shack shrank away and fled into the crowd.

Different again was the Salvation Army. Shack liked them about the best of all, perhaps by reason of their singing, which he was free and welcome to join in. They had their semblance of a band, made up of nondescript instruments, not omitting the hideous drum pounded on by a soldier ignorant of time and tune. But there was a soldier playing the big horn who knew how,—he poured a rich sustaining bass into the chorus, and when there were many voices the effect was altogether fine. It was great fun, singing with the Salvation Army, and Shack would stay by them night after night, till they marched back to their barracks. Of course they discovered him. The adjutant in command, alert for converts, spied his flushed and radiant face in the circle and went to him and besought him to come forward and testify. But Shack had nothing to testify to. Another time the adjutant requested all to raise their hands who believed themselves washed clean in the blood of Jesus.

“Up with your hand, friend!” he called out, to Shack. “Don’t be ashamed of your colors.”

Shack would not, however. “Nobody was ever washed clean in blood!” he made answer, and shuddered, and there was no more radiance in his face for a while.

And finally there were the revivals. These revivals were just then making a great stir; they were held in a vast barnlike rink, where as many as five thousand persons might sit and stand, and the place was al-

most always filled. No doubt some went out of curiosity, and some for the comfort of their bodies, the weather being cold, the times hard, and fuel costly; but the majority, after all, seemed to be concerned for the good of their souls, more or less seriously. There were two revivalists,—a preacher and a singer. The singer possessed a real gift for music and his songs were beautiful. They had a chorus of trained voices besides, and usually the congregation was asked to join. It was hard to keep so many thousands together, however, and the congregational singing was not a great success, except now and then, when, as by some mysterious inspiration, the crowd found itself and raised up its voices in harmony truly sublime. Once they sang, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus!" in such perfect unison, and with such a volume of sound, that Shack wished they might never stop.

The preaching, on the other hand, was very disagreeable. The preacher was bitter and vindictive. He troubled Shack much, and more and more.

"God says there's a hell for every Christless soul," this was a sentiment which the man never tired of repeating, with a hateful, gnashing utterance. "If He didn't mean what He said, why didn't He say what He meant?"

Shack winced as if a lash had been laid over his back. And he felt a resentment.

Once the preacher spoke in this wise: "A few years before Robert G. Ingersoll went to hell— What makes you look that way? That's where he went, according to God's word."

Shack had never heard of Robert G. Ingersoll, but now his heart went out to him. He was strongly minded to stand up for him. And his resentment rose.

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The revivalist was full of accusations,—here is another: “One of the grandest pictures on earth is a whole family on the way to heaven, the most horrible picture on earth is a whole family on the way to hell.”

This word hell troubled Shack especially. To him it sounded much worse in the mouth of the minister of God’s grace than ever it had sounded in the mouth of the profanest lumberjack,—there was such a hiss about it, such a suggestion of ugliness.

But decidedly the most troublesome part was a story which the preacher told concerning a young girl.

“There was once a young girl,” he said, “who went to the theater when she should have gone to church. She belonged to a Christian family, too,—she had the light, and sinned against it. She knew she ought to go to church, but she chose to go to the theater. She was warned. Kind friends warned her that her place was at church, and that if she went to the wicked theater instead, she put her soul in peril. She was stiffnecked, and went to the theater.

“What happened?

“Oh, my friends, what happened?

“The very next day she fell sick.

“And the day after that she died.

“And her soul is in hell. Do you doubt it? Then you call God a liar!”

It was too much,—Shack’s soul surged to his lips in protest. The sense of wrong rushed on him overwhelmingly, and every fiber of him was for grappling with it there and then. But straightway there came, too, a sick quaking, a feeling of impotence, and the upshot was an impulse to flee the place, a wish to get away from the crowd. His soul halted at his lips and shrank back,—he had no words in which to utter its protest. If he were to open his mouth nothing

would come out but a snarl, the cry of an offended animal,—he was sufficiently conscious of that, and so he fled.

In his ears was the sound of the exhorter's voice, harsh and pitiless, warning the people to come forward and confess before it was everlastingly too late. And the people were flocking up in answer to the call, with terror in all their faces. Shack met them, pushing and jostling, and they nearly swept him off his feet, they were so eager. But he was eager, too. There was a terror driving him,—in something very like a panic he fought his way out.

And though that was gone at once he cleared the crowd, there was still the impulse to get away, to escape the troublesome presence, to go where he could no more hear the pitiless warning voice or see the frightened faces. Instinctively he fell into his swift, easy Indian run, and ran and ran, until the haunts of men were behind him, and he was in the open spaces, with the whole expanse of the glittering sky above and about him,—the sky he had always known, his lifelong friend and companion, his unfailing guide and comfort. He slackened his pace when he saw himself among his familiars, the prairie stretches where the snow was trackless,—he looked up into the face of the sky; and strength came to him, a new strength of the soul. Why was he fleeing? What fled he from? In his strength he commanded the tumult of his emotions, to sort them out, and find where he stood.

Forthwith his conscience smote him. He had been a coward. What spirit but cowardice had possessed him, that he should desert those people when they were in such need? Those sheep who looked pathetically up and were fed with husks,—nay, worse

than husks, with deadly poison! His call had been to help them, and he had heard it not. His call had been to raise his voice to rescue them from that wicked man, and he had remained silent.

Because he had been afraid!

He would go back, then. Possibly it was not too late even yet. At all events he would go back.

He went, quickly,—his Indian run had never carried him faster. At the door of the rink he met the people coming out. There sat upon them a painful awe, and that reproached him. A good many of them had been crying—some were crying yet—and that reproached him still more.

There was nothing to be done that night, but another night was coming and he highly resolved it should be a night of reckoning. Anger flamed hot and high in him. Once more he sought the open spaces, and looked into the face of the sky, and grew stronger and stronger until he was a giant, with courage equal to anything. Nothing should daunt him, any more. He would face the man of evil and destroy him. He would grapple with the wrong and put it under his feet. He would strike the shackles off the multitude,—he would send them away, not weeping and trembling miserably, but laughing for joy in their freedom.

And so he wrapped himself in his panoply of high resolution,—all that night he was about it, and all the next day, until evening. At evening he repaired to the rink.

But though there was an immense congregation, immensely wrought upon, the preacher did not speak,—not so much as a word from first to last. He was present, but only to sit stiffly by, while numbers of other men, in white ties and long clerical coats, rose up one after another and praised him for a Paul come to bring the unrighteous to repentance. They were

clergymen, evidently,—no doubt the ministers of the churches under whose auspices the revivals were held. Anyway they vied with one another to make strong their eulogy, but no eulogy proved too strong for the fancy of the congregation. Burst upon burst of applause swept over the great assemblage. The air was stormy with cheers. Hundreds kept shouting that they were saved. Many wept. It would be hard to imagine a crowd more deeply moved.

After a good deal of this, a man rose up who was not a clergyman, by his manner,—rather a plain man of business; and presented a statement of what it had cost to conduct the meetings. There was something for the hire of the hall, something for heating, for lights, for printing, for a long list of sundries. Altogether the expense had been quite heavy.

“That part,” the man went on to say, “has been taken care of by private subscription,—the bills have been paid and need give us no further thought. But there is another matter,—called by some a delicate matter, I fail to see why,—but at all events a matter not to be dodged. I have reference to the compensation due this wonderful man for his wonderful work. Let me tell you that he has asked no pay whatever. We expressly requested him, when we opened negotiations, to set a price,—he would not. We offered him a guaranty,—he wouldn’t have it. He wouldn’t let us pay his board even. ‘But,’ said he, ‘when I am done, if the people are sufficiently pleased with my work to make me a free-will offering, I shall not reject it. I leave it for them to fix the value of my services. Under God, they are the best judge.’ That’s the man, my friends. Can we afford to be small with him?” (a torrent of dissent from all sides) “I agree with you, perfectly. Now, we are

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going to take up a collection, and it will be your free-will offering. We sha'n't count it,—whatever we get will be poured directly into his lap from the boxes. It is not my place to make any suggestion as to what the amount should be, but I will nevertheless venture a word. This man has brought upwards of a thousand vagrant souls to Jesus, and if the service isn't worth a dollar a soul, it's worth nothing. We are told that it costs several hundred dollars to save the average heathen soul, and the harvest is worth it, every penny. But the souls of our nearer brethren are quite as precious, and in even greater peril, if only because we who have the light and are primarily responsible for its dissemination, are all too apt to overlook the darkness which is under our very noses. These meetings have been highly fruitful, not only in the greater part of saving souls, but in the scarcely lesser part of showing us what souls there were to be saved; and I am sure we are grateful for the reminder, even though it should accuse us of neglect. For myself, I exult in the opportunity to make some return for the immeasurable benefit I have derived. I have purchased in my time a great deal of comfort and satisfaction with money, but never any to compare, in cheapness and quality, with the happiness I am purchasing now,—with this."

He drew out a bill as he finished, and flourished it ostentatiously, dropping it in the box,—it was a bill with a yellow back and by that no trifle. The congregation caught the spirit of lavishness as the tinder catches fire, and could scarcely wait till the boxes came to receive the offerings. A great clinking of money ensued. Bills were numerous, but coins were much more so, especially silver dollars, big and heavy, clashing one against another till the rattle and clatter were

something to hear. Meanwhile the man on the platform kept up a running fire of comment,—informal, even jocose; and the people laughed more and more. If there was an occasional outbreak of solemn fervor on the part of some overstrained soul, it only served to provoke fresh laughter. The laughing mood was well-nigh universal,—it had all but a very few.

Shack was of these few.

In order the better to do that which he purposed doing, he had taken up his station well forward, within a step or two of the front,—an Indian, in fact, might make the platform at a bound. There he waited till the services began; there smothered his disappointment when the preacher did not speak; and there felt a new and greater anguish than any yet. It was not for him to laugh. The man airily reckoned up the value of a soul saved in commercial terms and flourished his bill; the people howled their approval; the clergymen beamed radiantly to show how very pleased they were. No, there was nothing for Shack to laugh at.

None observed him. He jumped up, but pretty much everybody was jumping up likewise. A woman from behind jostled him violently,—set her shoulder against him and shoved him out of her way; she held a gleaming gold piece over her head and screamed that the Lord was her shepherd—and laughed. Others screamed, and there was laughter all the time, and none to observe Shack.

But now, of a sudden, above the uproar, a voice was lifted up, piercing and shrill. It was a yell, in fact, mingling agony with anger, and it was heard from end to end of the hall.

The voice was Shack's. Those nearest him dis-

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tinguished these words: "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise!"

That was the only utterance his protest found. The next instant he fell to the floor, with a loud crash among the chairs, foaming, and beating wildly with his arms and legs. People were startled, naturally,—the incident was so foreign and unexpected; but not for long. The tide of joyful enthusiasm ran too strong to be easily interrupted and very soon it was in full flood once more. Some men picked Shack up and carried him out through a side door into the alley. He was quiet by that time, limp and senseless.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

AN ambulance clattered into the alley, with a boyish surgeon who summed up his diagnosis in the one word, "Fit!"—nothing serious. They bundled the unconscious Shack off to the hospital and put him to bed; for a fit no more was necessary. But when the night passed and he did not recover his senses, they perceived that worse ailed him; and when, as the day advanced, he grew restless and delirious, they talked of brain fever.

In point of fact he was very near to finishing his earthly course there and then. It was a long, hard battle which he fought with death, with so much in favor of his grim foe. He was not neglected, after those first few hours,—the doctors and nurses did what could be done, and though it was only a narrow bed in the public ward which they gave him, a better would have availed nothing; it wasn't treatment he needed, but vitality,—there was so little to build recovery on. He sank and sank until he was desperately low. Day and night he was out of his head and raving. It was a curious mixture he talked in his wanderings,—nobody had ever heard anything like it,—Indian and French and English all at once; and a curious past it revealed,—in his dreams he hunted with his tribe, or drove oxen for the loggers,

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or wrangled with an imaginary somebody about his father's business. The hospital people conceived an uncommon interest in the frail boy,—not only the doctors and the nurses, but other patients who were near by; and not the less because they had no notion he could by any possibility pull through. One day he was seen to pluck incessantly at the coverlet, and an elderly man in the next bed, convalescent of a fever himself, solemnly declared it a sign of impending death never known to fail. The attendants didn't go by symptoms of that sort, but they agreed that death impended,—if the fellow got well it would be the greatest of wonders. But no less a wonder came to pass. Shack fought his way through, and lived. After many days he opened his eyes to look consciously about him.

And it happened that Father Peter was just at that moment administering supreme unction to a patient across the aisle. Who was Father Peter? A jolly priest who made the hospital, and especially the charity wards thereof, an especial care. The name of father sat upon him rather strangely, he was so young,—less than a year ordained, in fact; but no one grudged him any title whatsoever that should smack of respect and esteem, for in the few months of his ministration he had got himself mightily well liked. Catholics who had the misfortune to be brought there saw more than the man in him, but the man in him was amply enough to make him beloved of Protestants, scoffers and heathen. None had ever blessed his goodness more than an Arabian packpeddler who was laid up for weeks and weeks with a broken leg. He prayed assiduously to the Allah whose prophet was Mahomet, but Father Peter sat with him, and told him funny stories in French, with a wealth of gesture and

a perfection of mimicry such as should make his meaning clear without a word in any tongue; and never once mentioned religion. When the Arabian was well, he brought the priest a beautiful rug from Bokhara, and went away astonished and troubled to learn that no member of the Society of Jesus was permitted to have anything for his own,—not even the clothes he wore, coarse and scanty though they were.

It was Father Peter whom Shack saw first with conscious eyes. He was aware, rather clearly, considering his long sleep, what was going forward over there across the aisle, and he was taken with an impulse to fall on his knees. Was he not in the presence of God? 'Anyway, there were the identical motions. Yes, and the words as well,—*Corpus Domini, vitam eternam*, and the rest,—all in the same identical sing-song. But at once he thought of falling on his knees, he made the important discovery that he was already flat on his back. He would rise to the kneeling posture, then? No, he could not. He was too weak to lift his hand, even. He could turn his head a little, and that was all.

He could speak, though, and when he saw the priest going, he called to him, and made him hear. Father Peter came straightway over, with the sunniest of smiles on his beaming, rosy, Irish face, and in the cheeriest of voices asked him how he found himself.

"Some of that!" wheezed Shack, feebly, while his eyes fastened themselves on the leather case which hung from Father Peter's neck. It was something to eat,—why shouldn't he ask for it that way?

The priest spoke in a whisper to the doctor who came along at the moment. The doctor answered aloud that there was no immediate danger, and Father Peter turned back to Shack with a laugh.

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“You’re going to get well, old man,” he said.

Shack knew he was being put off, and it wasn’t to his taste. He grew peevish, like a child denied some goody his heart is set on,—his lips quivered and his eyes filled with tears. But Father Peter had seen sick men before,—he knew their whims and fancies; and he kept up such a flow of good spirits that Shack was carried away by it and forgot his vexation and at length was in tolerably good spirits himself.

The priest promised to come and see him next day, and the promise was fulfilled; not only that day, but every day during the rest of his stay, did Father Peter bring his gift of cheerfulness, his bit of banter, his story, his laughter best of all. Shack remembered the communion, and asked for it once or twice, but still he was put off, and thereupon, having become stronger and less childish, he understood that the mysterious wafer was not for him. Moreover, as the childish mood passed, the whim went with it, for after all it was only a whim. What was a mere bit of tasteless bread to him, anyway?

They became famous friends. Dr. Robert was Shack’s dearest friend, of course, but next to Dr. Robert stood Father Peter. They were as different, too, as men could well be, these friends; Dr. Robert silent and sober,—Father Peter talkative and gay; Dr. Robert a Frenchman with rather little of the French levity and effervescence,—Father Peter an Irishman with all the Irish charm, very witty though not too witty to be kind. Yet they were alike in one respect,—their interest in Shack. Dr. Robert himself could not have taken more interest in the waif, for waif once more he was.

Of course he had to leave the hospital, just as soon as he could safely be turned out,—his narrow bed was

a gift of philanthropy and in brisk demand. What was to become of him hereupon? His wheel was gone. His best recollection, not very good, was that he had left it in his shed while he went to beard the revivalist, but if he was right in that; somebody had found it and appropriated it. Anyway it was lost to him and he was a grinder no longer. In that emergency Father Peter saw that he was provided for. The Jesuits had a large church, the largest in town, where several thousand families worshiped, and in connection with the church a great school; there was a good deal of work about the two institutions, and some that could be done by a common laborer like Shack, if he was willing to labor, as the fathers themselves did, for a bare living. And Shack was very willing. In fact, he could not have asked for a place more to his liking.

After that they two became more famous friends than ever.

The surroundings were like nothing Shack had ever encountered hitherto. He was apart from the world. Every day the world or people who were of the world, came there to worship or to study, but it was not to bring their worldliness with them; even they came under the spell of the spirit which brooded over Sts. Peter and Paul's, for that was the official name of the establishment. It was a religious retreat after a particular form of religion, and a form which made the utmost of the emotions. Of course Shack was affected, and deeply,—the crudest and most elemental appeal would not be lost on him, so long as it was directed to the feelings. If such a thing as conversion were possible with a soul so elusive and uncertain, it would be by just such influences.

Father Peter never talked with Shack about relig-

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ious matters on his own motion and he had the air of evading the subject if it was otherwise brought up. Perhaps he was waiting for the emotional foundation to make itself very broad and firm. If so he waited not in vain. Shack was assailed with no arguments, only scantily was his curiosity indulged; but all the while he was gaining a new religious sense, more definite and formal, more Catholic, more Jesuit.

Mass was celebrated in the chapel every morning, and it was a strict regulation that faculty, students and common help should all attend, unless particularly dispensed. Shack was not dispensed, nor on the other hand was he so much as apprised of the regulation; yet he never once missed mass during all his connection.

You have observed Catholics entering their churches, how they bend the knee before the altar, as they take their seats? It was only a morning or two till Shack was bending the knee like the others. Nobody told him to do that, either.

There were always some few from the parish without, at this daily mass,—faithful souls who delighted in worship, and had the time for it; and among them, especially, a bowed and shrunken old woman, dressed in the deepest black, who knelt at the altar of the Virgin and counted her beads. She would throw back her veil as she prayed, and her face, with the light of eternity on it, was sweet and peaceful. Shack did not know the prayers of the Rosary, but somehow he became possessed of a string of beads and every day he knelt before the image of Mary to fumble them over.

Daily communicants were rare. In all that vast parish of ten thousands souls, you could count the daily communicants on the fingers of your two

hands,—that is, among the laity. The sweet old woman was one of them,—as often as the bell on the altar tinkled to warn the people of the elevation of the host, she would struggle up from her knees and go tottering unsteadily forward to receive the body of her Lord. And whoever officiated in the mass, there was a tenderness in his manner when he came to that figure huddled at the foot of the altar and a softness in his muttered *Corpus Domini*; and then the old woman would come tottering back, with her shriveled hands clasped together in the attitude of adoration, and her countenance eloquent of the peace that passeth all understanding. Shack saw it all, looked into that face,—and soon he, too, was a daily communicant.

Not without difficulties, however. He would bungle his confession. Father Peter found it a desperately hard thing to make Shack understand about confession. He was not unwilling to accuse himself, however,—that wasn't the trouble at all; rather was he too willing. The priest taught him the names of the seven deadly sins—pride and covetousness, lust and anger, gluttony and envy and sloth, and was amazed, on the occasion of his penitent's first confession, to hear him own up, in the most sweeping fashion to all of them. Nothing was more certain than that he was innocent as a babe under at least four of the heads, and under the others quite inoffensive, as men go; yet he would have himself thought deeply guilty of all. And no wickedest culprit ever showed himself more relieved upon being absolved; he made his communion, he told his beads before the Virgin, and came away with his head in the clouds. Sin was the prior fact to his elation,—why should he not go in for a lot of it? In some such way, perhaps, he reasoned, if he reasoned at all.

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The church of Sts. Peter and Paul had been rebuilding during several years, on a scale of great magnificence; and now it was finished, and about to be dedicated with all possible pomp and ceremony. There were plenty of priests, between the church and the school,—as many deacons and acolytes as could be used. Sts. Peter and Paul was famous for its ceremonies, anyway; nowhere, not even in Rome itself with all its multitude of priests, were the solemn high festivals celebrated in better form. The Tenebrae of Holy Thursday, for instance, were spoken of as one of the shows of the city,—every year throngs of Protestants and unbelievers came out for to see; and any Catholic will tell you that if a church does justice to the Tenebrae, the rest is comparatively easy.

The Society of Jesus having built the edifice, it was fittingly to be dedicated on the feastday of the Holy Name, somewhere about the middle of January. It turned out a bitter cold day, such that the rich came in their furs and the poor with all their rags about them,—but everybody came, and the vast temple was filled to overflowing. The pews were all taken half an hour before the services began, and though chairs were set in the aisles, there were still people standing wherever an open space presented itself. It meant something to be in the midst of such a crowd, provided you had feelings like Shack's. When the bell tinkled for the beginning of the canon, and all that immense throng knelt down, with a rustling of garments, Shack reeled in his rapture and would have cast himself prostrate on his face, only that there wasn't room.

And the altar, what words can make you see it as he saw it?

There were a thousand candles burning,—not strictly candles, you understand, but jets of gas kindled

all at once by an electric spark,—it would take the altar-boys an endless time to light so many real candles. But even these were not all the light. Overhead, in the ceiling of the sanctuary, there was some sort of a contrivance, similar in its effects to the footlights of a theater, by means of which a very especial radiance was cast down on the noble figure of the Saviour, and the lesser figures round about it. Some might say Jesus looked but strangely, in the midst of all that rich splendor, but Shack wasn't so struck. On the contrary, the splendor thrilled him with new conviction,—it was the character and stamp of divinity in his eyes. As never yet the Real Presence was indeed real, to him. To make a wafer seem God, that was a mighty hard thing, perhaps not truly achieved, if the exact fact is to be set down; but this glorious image, with the light streaming down upon it, was not it very convincing? Yet there was even more and better,—the Holy Name itself. A little forward of the main altar, and directly over the communion rail, it burst forth, in letters of living fire, hung there you knew not how unless by divine interposition,—the name at which every knee in heaven and earth shall bow,—the sacred name of Jesus.

Jesus!

When Shack looked up and beheld the Holy Name, his heart was near bursting. Its effulgence stunned his eyes and held them fascinated, though he was not without a vague feeling that he ought to bow his head; and there was a warmth, if he was not mistaken, descending upon his upturned face. Who could doubt of the Real Presence, now? Not Shack, at all events; Jesus was there looking down with unspeakable sweetness and benignity, pouring out his love till you felt the warmth of it on your face. And who should omit

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to adore Him? Not Shack,—he humbled himself as low as he possibly could, and longed for more room that he might throw himself prostrate in the dust.

And the mass,—well, certainly, mass had never so taken hold of him and that was saying a good deal, because he was always strongly affected by the ceremony; even the low mass, of a dark winter morning, with frost in the church and no light but the feeble flicker over the altar, took hold of him,—figured for him, if nothing so definite as the tragedy of Calvary, at least something very awful and mysterious. But here was light and warmth till darkness and cold seemed forever banished from the earth. The space within the sanctuary swarmed with vested priests and boys swinging censers,—a flood of color to capture the sight, a flood of perfume,—no, not a flood either; the incense floated back too delicately for that. But whether or no, it lifted him up. And more than all was the music, sweeping down from the loft behind him,—the organ, with its throbbing bass, the quivering strings, the trumpets and flutes, and the voices of men and women. The melancholy Kyrie swelled into the triumphant Gloria, and Shack was lifted up, and borne away. Heavenward? Everything was bearing him heavenward.

No, not quite everything.

Among the dignitaries on the altar there was one singled out by the deference paid him. There was a gorgeous throne set out for him, and the priests fetched gorgeous garments and, making servants of themselves vested him in these. Shack saw him but dimly, at first,—only the profile of his face; and thought no more about him than that he was some supremely fortunate man chosen to serve the Most High in an especial capacity, until he rose from his

throne and came forward, in all his flaming finery, to preach. Thereupon it appeared that he was none other than the bishop,—Nora's bishop. Shack's rapture was undeniably affected, undeniably damped; and yet, after all, what did it greatly matter? He could shut his ears to the sermon, since it was for him but a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal, and raise his eyes to the Holy Name, and the noble image of the Saviour, and believe, for all the bishop, that Jesus was there indeed.

Shack was by all tokens a Catholic, but he couldn't stop there; the time was not long coming when he would be, moreover, a Jesuit. He had not forgotten his father's business,—the thought of it had come back with his senses; and by it he was only the more assured of his call to be a priest of the Society of Jesus. Did not these Jesuits all about him take up their cross daily, and follow Jesus as He bade them? At any rate they seemed to Shack so to do,—he saw nothing of them which did not make them out devoted, given up to sacrifice, their garb, their fare, their duties, and chiefly their cheerful readiness,—what were these but so many proofs of consecration?

Cheerfully ready they certainly were, no matter what the exaction,—that was their character revealed in every relation. One day the president of the school, a man whose tireless activity had made him a familiar figure, was missing, and in his place and about his duties another priest, who was a complete stranger. Ordinarily Shack was little given to curiosity, but he was prompted to ask about the president, what had become of him.

"He has been called away," Father Peter answered him. For good? It might be,—only the general of the Society knew as to that. And who was this general?

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One who might say to any Jesuit, Go! and he went.

Shack was greatly interested. "The president—did he say anything—say why he was called away?"

"He didn't know. His orders came by the hand of the reverend father who was to take his place,—that was his first intimation. In less than an hour he was on his way to St. Louis."

"Did he wish to go?"

Father Peter smiled. "A Jesuit may have no wish," he said.

"But the friends—the students—they loved him so. He is sorry to leave them?"

"A Jesuit is glad to obey."

It was there and then that Shack made his avowal. "I will be a Jesuit!" he exclaimed, quivering with earnestness

Father Peter was not visibly rejoiced,—his outward air was rather that of regret, as for an ambition which looked too high and was foredoomed to disappointment.

"The Society of Jesus draws its recruits from the flower of the seminaries," was his quiet rejoinder, and the implication wasn't very flattering.

"I am ready to go to the seminaries!" protested Shack, stoutly.

"Far from it," Father Peter was frank, though gentle, "so far that only years and years of hard labor will make you ready, if indeed you have it in you to be made ready at all."

Then he went on briefly to describe not only the grind of study by which a candidate became a novice, but the toilsome course which brought the patient novice successively through the degrees of formed temporal coadjutor, approved scholastic, formed spiritual coadjutor, the professed of three vows, the pro-

fessed of four vows. It was a formidable outlook, as the priest made it appear.

Could anything be better calculated to fire Shack's zeal? Probably not.

"I am ready!" he repeated, glowing. If he wasn't ready for the seminary, he would begin with some earlier step, but begin he must.

Father Peter had still other obstacles to point out, however,—still more cold water to throw, by which to make this singular fire of ardor to flame higher. He spoke of the final vows, what hardship they imposed, what sacrifice they exacted.

"A Jesuit," quoth he, "effaces himself or he is false to his solemn obligations. He is bound to watch himself every minute of his life, to be on his guard against whatever impulses proceed from the self, in order that he may deny them. Though he becomes at length the president of a great school, respected and beloved not only by the teachers and pupils whom he meets intimately, but by the community at large which looks up to him as a useful citizen, he is not to expect that he will be suffered to gratify a natural wish to remain such. Without a moment's warning, he may be sent to be the pastor of a handful of wretched lepers on some lone island in the Pacific; and unless he goes with entire submission, without regret, cheerfully accepting the behest of his general, then he is less than true to his vows. Though there is but the merest trace of resentment and rebellion in his inmost soul, and though it lasts but the fleetingest instant, he has violated his obligation. To such a degree must a Jesuit efface himself."

Shack was delighted. "Of course," he cried. "That's how you get your power over men. I told the bishop so, but he wouldn't believe me."

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The bishop? It was Father Peter's curiosity which was moved, now, and so the story came out. But though the priest listened in kindly wonder, the look in his face spelled anything but approval.

"A Jesuit has no opinions of his own touching sacred things," he said, when he had heard all about the salvation of Jean Valjean. "Those matters were decided for us long ago."

Shack's face fell. He could see the president give up his great place and applaud the sacrifice, but when it came to giving up his father's business as he understood it,—well, he felt a chill, to say the least.

Father Peter went on:

"Pride is the deadliest of all sins, in one who has been called to serve God in the holy ministry; and there is no pride so dangerous, so unweariedly to be guarded against, as the pride of opinion, for it comes to us in the most respectable garb, disguised as the love of truth, than which no sentiment can be more admirable,—it possesses us before we are aware of our danger. The Society is especially careful, by its discipline, to save its members from the pride of opinion. A Jesuit is permitted to have no beliefs of his own, no theories, no notions. What a sacrifice that entails only the man of active intellect—and he is the type of the Jesuit—can know; certainly it is a very great sacrifice indeed. But it is essential to be made."

Very like a rebuke. And Shack was made ashamed. On the spot he made his choice,—no sacrifice was too great for him. He put all his cherished dreams away, and stifled all regret for them.

"I am ready!" he said, for the third time.

But he was not destined to join the Society of Jesus.

CHAPTER VIII.

HARVEST OF HATE

YOU remember the A. P. A.? These were the palmy days of that extraordinary league. It was not far from that time that there went abroad the famous rumor to the effect that Catholics were secretly arming themselves, and only awaited a signal to rise and slaughter their Protestant neighbors, in another and more terrible St. Bartholomew. The story ran that the cellars of Catholic churches were stored with arms and ammunition, muskets and cutlasses, powder and ball; and there, too, the faithful were called together by night, to drill, to subscribe sanguinary oaths, to hearken to the murderous exhortations of their priests. Handbills were scattered broadcast which professed to quote, word for word, an address or bull from the Pope himself admonishing his children to smite and spare not, and offering plenary indulgence to all who should exert themselves in the holy cause. It was a curious yarn, and more curious still was the credit given it. Sundry timid souls, though they lived with Catholics for their near neighbors, had them for business associates, met them in company daily, saw all their goings-out and comings-in, were nevertheless stricken with a great terror, and thought themselves in danger of their lives. There was a certain woman, not so very exceptional, per-

haps, who, having taken to board a weak-eyed, thin-chested, bloodless youth, with hardly enough force in him to keep up a conversation,—she was made frantic with fear when she discovered that this specimen of a man was a Catholic, and that he often repaired to his church of an evening. She gathered all her children into her own bed, that night, locked and barricaded the door, and only after lying quaking and sleepless till day dawned, summoned courage to scream from her window to the police to come and take her lodger away. Among such the A. P. A. had a great following, and there were besides these not a few who thought they discerned in the movement a popular upheaval which it was worth their while to get on the right side of.

The Catholics, on their part, didn't stop to try the Christian virtue of turning the other cheek. The A. P. A. they cordially detested and their bearing toward it was anything but temperate and restrained. The Irish were especially bitter, thinking they had an especial reason, for the A. P. A. was closely related to the Orange Order, which they had been at deadly odds with for upwards of two centuries. Even Irishmen who had quite fallen away from their ancestral church, who had neglected their religious duties these years, would fume and swell and bluster over the A. P. A., and show all kinds of fight, as only Irishmen can. And the clergy, though warier about taking open cognizance of the attack, at length caught the infection, and struck back, as opportunity offered. After all, priests were but human, and bishops set over them were but human, and if the old Adam was unapostolically in evidence, that was a very human condition of things. The Jesuits, wariest of all, were about the

last to give way, but give way they did, and one Sabbath morning it was announced from the altar of Sts. Peter and Paul where the Real Presence of the Prince of Peace was so convincingly suggested, that a week later, at the evening service, Father Peter would preach, and his subject would be the A. P. A.

Shack, listening to the announcement, wondered what the A. P. A. was; he had never heard of it, or the trouble it was making,—the flood of bitterness had not touched him, in his aloofness. He wondered, moreover, why Father Peter was chosen to preach, since he was the youngest of the faculty, and not heard except on small occasions, in the sacristy or at the outer missions? But he was immensely pleased, and eager for the appointed time to come; beyond a doubt Father Peter would say something very grand and good and worth hearing.

The public at large were better informed. Of course they knew what the A. P. A. was,—its name was in all mouths. And they knew, too, why Father Peter was appointed to preach. It was the commonest fling of the A. P. A. that Catholics were foreigners and remained foreigners, no matter how long they lived in America. But Father Peter was undeniably not foreign,—few had so good a title to the contrary. His father had fallen in the charge of the Irish Brigade at Fredericksburg, and his great grandfather had starved with Washington at Valley Forge; and what was more, everybody knew it. Father Peter was in an especial sense qualified to speak of the A. P. A.

The occasion brought out a big attendance, and once more the vast edifice found itself filled to overflowing, Shack's bosom swelled with exultation when he perceived what a multitude had assembled,—it made his

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friend a great figure. All these thousands should hang upon his lips, should take thereupon refreshment, and Father Peter's light should shine before the faces of men, for their illumination. As for himself he went in two hours before the hour, supperless and with never a thought of supper, he was so anxious to get a place near the pulpit, where no word, no gesture, no least look should escape him. The pulpit was a box-like affair, hung against a massive pillar like a bird-cage, with spiral stairs leading up to it; and Shack sat almost directly below.

There were the usual vespers, and the benediction of the sacrament, hurried through with, for almost no one was there for vespers or benediction; and then Father Peter came down from the altar, in his black robe, girded at the waist with a coarse rope, and mounted the pulpit.

And yet was it Father Peter?

Shack, who had known him in many moods, hardly knew him at all, now. Who had ever seen him look like that? The rosy flush had departed from his cheek and the merry twinkle was gone from his eye. He was very pale, with a sinister pallor suggestive of evil passion, and he glared down from his high place as fiercely as a wild beast. His fine face was distorted with the tenseness of its muscles,—his jaws, showing all too coarsely now, were set as if they never meant to open. His very hair bristled, as might an angry dog's,—the soft, thick hair which had ever seemed such a fit crown become a tumbled mop to add its touch to the disquieting picture. Shack stared up, wondered first if it was Father Peter, hoped for an instant it might not be, turned cold and shivered at length with the certainty that it was none other.

And the sermon,—who had ever heard its like? Water to a thirsting soul? That was what Shack was expecting. And water it was, perhaps, but seething hot, to sear instead of refresh.

Father Peter did not forget his art, hard learned with the assiduous practice of many years. But though he began quietly, with an assumption of almost conversational ease, no art could suppress the hiss in his voice. And the hiss grew, and brought in other disagreeable things to bear it company, until presently all restraint was thrown away and Loyola's ardent disciple let himself stand forth that spectacle of least appeal,—a man with a personal grievance.

He asked his hearers to think of Ireland, as Ireland was two hundred and fifty years ago,—the home of a virtuous, seemly people, who loved their country and were true to the faith of their fathers. Because they were true to their faith and loved their country the miscreant Cromwell was offended and visited them with his displeasure,—came with his trained fighting men, and put the peaceful people down, and set his iron heel on their necks. Who had not heard of Drogheda, the village which dared resist the invader, the robber, the murderer, who made good his title and sealed his infamy to the end of time by putting not only the men but the women and children to the sword? It was the act of a savage, the parallel to which you will scarce find in the annals of Indian warfare,—but it was by no means the worst he did. He sent hundreds of families away into exile, to rot under the pitiless sun of the tropics, but even that wasn't the worst. The worst was the literal curse which he laid upon the land, the curse o' Crummell, as you will hear it spoken of to this day, when he brought over

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those colonists from England to take the land from its rightful owners. The devil that possessed the master possessed likewise these his true servants. The oppression he began they carried on with fiendish zeal,—the pattern he set they exceeded in all that made it wicked.

“And it was by such a heat,” cried Father Peter, “that this serpent called the A. P. A. was hatched. From those crimes, the blackest in all human history, springs the evil plant which flowers among us to-day, to offend, with its pestilent stench, the nostrils of decent men. Though deprived of its proper atmosphere of cruelty and tyranny and revenge and murder and rapine, it feeds itself on lies and slander, and makes shift to live and trouble the ways of honest people.”

Shack understood nothing, but he felt,—these were frightful things, frightfully spoken of; and the cold struck to his marrow.

This hideous monstrosity (Father Peter proceeded) was not fetched hither directly from Ireland. No, it had been given the benefit of a transplantation, into fit soil, namely, the soil of Canada, where the old feuds could be kept up, because Canada was British, that is to say, of the nation which was not ashamed to account Cromwell one of its most glorious names, not ashamed to deify a red-handed murderer; because Canada was peopled with traitors who, when they could no longer make the colonies Tory, fled to the north and became the enemies of their country. Traitors! Behold their spawn, years later, when the free states were in a life-and-death struggle,—behold the spawn of these traitors plotting still against all that was good and true and noble, in behalf of all that was base and wrong. That was Canada, and that was

the soil to which the curse o' Crummell was transplanted, to gather venom for this last assault on free institutions.

"And shall these reptiles," here Father Peter raised his voice till the arches rang, "come here and tell me I am not an American because I am a Catholic, because I am a priest, because I am a Jesuit?"

For a moment he paused, and a perfect stillness fell on the multitude. When he resumed, it was in another voice, his splendid bass, now, rolling out like the diapason of an organ.

"Is there," he thundered, tossing his head defiantly, "is there, within the sound of my voice, a member of the A. P. A.?"

Again he paused, and the stillness was like the stillness of death.

"If there be," he went on, with a scornful curl of his lip, "let him act the man for once in his life, and come forth, and confront me!"

He leaned low over the bar of the pulpit and glared into the startled faces upturned to him. He looked a lion about to spring. It was terrible. Shack's heart stood still.

"Nobody comes forth!" roared the priest, tremendously. "Let him cower, then, and creep on his belly like the reptile he is, but nevertheless let him hear what I have to say. Let him know, and let his wicked order know, that I hurl down the gage of battle to them all. I imprecate God's choicest damnation on them, and so far as in me lies I make myself the instrument of that damnation. Between such as they and me, there can be but one sentiment, and for that sentiment there can be but one name,—undying, unrelenting HATE!"

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Shack heard no more. That black word, spoken in that black way, blotted out everything,—everything,—the Holy Name flaming aloft, the dear gilt figure on the altar, all vanished. There was nothing but blackness round about him, and it stifled him.

The people drifted slowly out through the narrow doors, and he drifted with them,—he could do no other, for he was only an atom in the mass. But when he was out at last, and free of the hampering crowd, with the heavens his only roof and his only walls, he broke into his swiftest run.

BOOK IV
DR. ROBERT'S DIARY



DR. ROBERT'S DIARY

17 of May.

'As I hoped, so was it to be. If I was lonely before, how glad am I not become! My boy have come back to me.

Yet with a sadness.

I am like unto the father whose only son has returned. But he is no more the son he was. Alas not!

He stole upon me without warning. It was this morning. I went to the barn to give the horses breakfast. The door of the barn stood open. I was startled. Had thieves, then, visited me, for the first time in all the years? No, it was far from so. In a moment I heard the voice,—the voice of Jacques.

He was rubbing the horses & speaking to them. Already he had given them breakfast.

I stood in the doorway. He looked up.

Jacques: "Good morning!"

Myself: "Ah, my boy! You have come back!"

I was full of emotion, but he was as he had not been absent, as there had been none of the many, many months. Had he been with me yesterday, it is so he would have speak on seeing me for the first time to-day. To say "Good morning!" this was among the things which I taught him. In the lumber-camp he would be long learning so much of manners.

The horses which he rubbed while they partook of breakfast, their joy was large. No wonder! Was

it not he who rubbed them last? For the horse to be rubbed it is equal in joy to the man who bathes after journey so long & hot & dustful. My neglect of the beasts is extremely shameful. The litter so much had it accumulated should remind Jacques that he was long away, but no.

How should I not derive alarm? He cleaned the stables in the manner of his saying the "Good morning!" That is, no intelligence was in it,—only the habit. Habit—the instinct *in actu*—was guide him back to the things of familiarity, & the things of familiarity provoke more instinct, more habit. Such my thought, while I observe him. Was he become a wreck of the mind? What a sadness!

He make the breakfast for me, as of old. However, I could not eat, for the alarm, & the sadness. He regard me with an expression. For me not to eat, this should interrupt the familiarity of things, it was the cause of the habit faltering, the instinct to doubt of itself. Yet he say nothing.

He will set the house in order. There was very much to do,—once again the interruption of the familiarity. He gazed at the thick dirt covering the floor, & there was perplexity with him for a moment.

My heart grow heavier.

He will prepare dinner & there is more perplexity. He went out in the little field, where nothing is but weeds. He search, was troubled, I hear him mutter with himself. He examined the vines on the fence, on the house, in an anxious manner. Was that for the identifying, for the making sure if he was indeed come home? As a dog might sniff, to make himself sure!

Presently he came in. He brings dandelions, mustard. These he boil.

To myself I declare: "I must eat. I am not hungry, but I must not shake the habit, proceeding from the familiarity of things. In the habit all hope lies. I must keep him in the habit, which will perhaps lead him to himself."

I ate. The dinner was excellent.

In afternoon I observe him in the field. He was search, troubled. I thereupon drew him away. "Come!" I say. We went in the woods. I put his club in his hand. A partridge flew up, it was perhaps ten yards off, he let fly and he kill the bird! He exults. His eye grew bright and he chatter excitedly, in Indian.

For supper he roasts the partridge. He has appetite. Now he have gone to bed, to sleep at once, to snore loudly.

He has been in illness, I can detect. Yet in the bodily way he is not less well. Witness the appetite, the sleeping with snores. Because the mind, with its turmoil, troubles him no more, being a blank?

If so, too bad!

Of what have happen him, he hints no suggestion. If I will ask him,—he regards me with blankness.

25 of May.

I sing, with the viol, as formerly. But no, he will not join. I show him the books. He will look at them. He will hold the book in his hand, stare at the page. However, he does not read. After a time, he turn away, or it may be fall asleep.

If he is melancholy, it will be English in which he

mutters. I have hear him say, below his breath: "The world, very big!"

But if he speak up gladly, it is in Indian.

No doubt he is day by day the Indian more. The simple, the gentle savage. He rejoices to roam the woods, to hunt, to fish. He will search no longer the garden, perplexedly. Once he have omit to rub the horse. Twice he have omit to set the house in order. Since when he look up to me in the door of the stable he have never say: "Good morning!"

The habit weakens? Sad!

For what then?

Anyway it will be better he became the savage than the idiot. On the savage there is building afresh.

9 of June.

To-day I was call away, to a patient. About the hour of noon I return. Jacques not to be seen!

Nor is dinner prepared. But for that matter I was not hungry.

My thought: "He is gone! He is vanished forever!"

That was the moment at which I beheld smoke rising from the woods. I proceeded to it. Jacques was there. He have built a small fire, to cook an animal. He is eating the same as I come up. He tears it with his teeth. He smears his face with the fat.

The animal was a muskrat.

There lives with me the great fear to lose him. He is my boy still, though the Indian. Moreover, if I shall keep him with me, he may become more than the Indian, as he was before. Instinct guides him.

What day may not his instinct point him to the wilderness whence he came? Or what night?

I fear the night most. He sleeps like a child. I listen while he snores. I dare not to close my eyes for the apprehension he will waken and flit away like a dream. To lose him—what pain! Intolerable! Such wish have I to keep him!

Is it to be selfish? Yes. I cannot deny. I wish to keep him in order that I shall have the son in my old age.

Yet there is more.

The faithful will speak of Providence. Since I am a pagan, I will speak of Fate. It is equal, by any name,—the power of the destiny,—that which moves men about, working upon them from without and from within.

Was it by chance my boy came to me first? Not! Fate sent him to me, for a purpose. Also Fate took him away, for a purpose. How do I know? Precisely for the reason that I could bow myself to his going,—there was regret, but always something told me he should go. That was the voice of Fate. Accordingly, I submit to let him go. But he came back to me,—to me, not to his wilderness! Should it be chance? Not! Fate have sent him back to me, for a purpose.

What may be this purpose, who knows? Not I. I only know my part,—it shall be what I say.

The wish to keep him, which fills me so, which makes me lie waking at night, for the apprehension to lose him,—it is the proof of my appointment. I am appointed to keep him, anyway for a time. The wish, so strong and so filling, is the voice of Fate, commanding me to my part.

There is selfishness in me, but there is more.

My boy has come, in his course, to the brink of a chasm,—I should call it the chasm of forgetfulness. I am chosen to convey him safely over.

Credo! This do I believe.

17 of June.

There is yet fire in the flint. It have been struck forth, though the steel should not be of my bringing.

To the little schoolhouse about 1 mile from here comes to preach, now and then, in the afternoon of Sunday, an old man. He came yesterday. It may have been about 2 o'clock when a wagonful of the pious, going to hear him, passed by. They were men & women & children, perhaps 8 or 9 of them. I was sitting within, out of the sight of these persons. Jacques loitered under the tree. To him, lying under the tree, the people called out, with the invitation to go with them. He sprang up, climbed in the wagon, amid laughter and gayety, after which they drove on.

I felt the jealousy. It was lonely to see him depart, though it shall be only for a season. However, why may I not be glad if the neighbors will help me to keep him? Jealousy, it is the selfish part.

At 5 o'clock I see him next. I sit within. I am thinking of him, too, when he darts before me. He is in a hurry. He falls upon the tall weeds in the garden, pulling them up, until he have a space cleared. I am considerably amazed. Yet the augury is excellent. Is not the habit becoming restored?

His face betrays intelligence, shining brightly.

He leaves the weeds. He is busy with the vines, tying them up in some place where they will fall down.

After all he hastens to the stable. There he rubs the horse.

His countenance shines more and more. Will the habit lift him to the level of the conscious? I wait for him to speak. He speaks nothing, however.

Without a word he retires to bed.

But in the night he calls out. I hear him say, distinctly; "They build a tower of Babel!"

I run. He is started up. He exclaims: "The bishop!" Afterwards: "Nora!"

The excitement upon him is not to my like. I wish to fan up the flame,—to bring forward the intelligence. But the fever burns in his cheek. I choose instead to soothe him. I sit by him, to hold his hand, to rub his brow lightly, until he falls asleep.

What shall the morrow bring? It was that I ask myself, while I sit with him. Shall he be himself? Or shall he be the Indian?

The morrow have come. He is—the Indian!

From neighbors I soon discover that the old man of the schoolhouse preached his discourse upon the tower of Babel,—I resolve to make trial of the flint, to strike more spark. I resolve to take the steel in my own hand, with the hope to strike in the right manner.

The trial was to-night.

From the Scripture I read out this story, of the tower, in a slow way, with much meaning, and thrill in my voice. Jacques listens,—in silence, however.

More will be necessary, then. I venture, at hazard: "The old man of the schoolhouse, he builds a tower of Babel?"

No word.

Myself: "The bishop, he builds a tower of Babel!"

No word.

Myself, casting about: "Or Nora!"

No word.

The trial fails. The spark springs not forth, for me. Because it is dead,—gone out with the one flash? No, I will not say so. Rather will I say that I bungle with the steel,—for that the spark answers not.

Who may have been Nora? An affair of the heart? Incredible! He is not the being for such. Yet he is a man withal.

6 of July.

He is greatly as a child. Why not, I ask, treat him as a child?

When I am far call, whereby I shall be absent during many hours, at times by night, I fear for to leave him,—the loneliness, I declare, will be upon him to prompt him to be off. I discover the necessity for to procure with him some interest which shall cause him to wish to accompany with me.

It is his vanity I will herewith work upon. Vanity is elemental. The child is vain,—even the beast.

But how? Very simply, I assure him that the horses will travel very much the better if he will drive him. I deplore my own lack of skill, how little I grasp the art. If he drive, I praise his manner loudly.

The stratagem work admirably. It come about very presently that he will not let me drive. He will go with me everywhere.

To-day, for experiment, I will take up the reins, as we are starting forth. What takes place? He snatches the reins from me, with impatience,—he scolds me, after a fashion. I affect much humility, under his frown. In my heart, meanwhile, I am jubilant.

He fattens. He becomes another person, bodily. For this I am far from wholly glad. It speaks of the torpor of the mind,—perhaps more. His temperament is not for fat, which accordingly speaks of that which is not well.

1 of August.

He is in small danger to leave me. Not as I feared, at all events. It is another manner of leaving which is to apprehend,—worse! He sleeps too much. He grows too fat. He breathes hard, is dull. He forgets to be the Indian, even,—neglects his woods,—loiters,—drowns. This is not at all the well Indian.

Always is he with me. Like a dog he follows,—my shadow!

Lower than savagery he lapses, sadly lower. Imbecility! Yet will that be the worst? I fear, I fear! The fat gathers about his heart. His brain is touched, until he have the confusion of ideas. To him remains clear but the one idea, that I am not fit to drive the horse,—it has possessed him much.

What shall the fat end in? I speak it with cold heart,—death!

If he will only live!

Once I have know the woman who was mother of some fine children & an idiot besides. Which loved she best? Precisely the idiot. He was a helpless thing, a burden for her night & day, loathsome, hideous,—yet on him precisely was her love rested. For him would she slight the others,—for him she thought first. He survived more than thirty years, to the end he was more irksome than a baby,—when he died at last, the woman was torn with grief. She mourned & mourned.

A trait of the human nature, than which nothing is more strange. But I fathom the woman's sentiment as never before up till yet.

If only I can have my boy! If he die, how shall I endure it?

8 of September.

He still lives. But a crisis draws on,—it may be the crisis of dissolution.

If such be on the knees of the gods, so be!

To-day I could not wake him. For 5 hours he would lie insensible. His heart—bad. His breath—difficult.

I have brace myself for the end. Fortitude!

But he open his eye, after all. I was by. He say: "Good morning!"—the first time for long.

Ever since he have been more bright,—or am I wrong? Though I shall be right, it may be augury of the worst, notwithstanding.

15 of September.

Another spark from the flint!

It is to-night.

We are driving in from far. The moon, which is almost full, looks down in a lovely manner. The evening is such as a poet will sing in praise of, so mild, so bright, so friendly. A peace broods. You are impossible not to be touch by the evening.

Jacques sits by me, with the reins. Since a week he has been more and more bright. Now and then he will speak to the horses. He will say: "Come, boys!" or, "Steady, boys!" or possibly other words.

Suddenly he sings.

At the moment we are pass through a leafy aisle, where the tall tree rise, and the moon shines densely

down upon us. You can swear you feel the beams of this, they are so strong.

The song he sings is to me strange. Moreover, he sings it only in part,—in snatches. I find myself startled, also thrilled with the thought what it may mean. But I remember to listen. To fix, in my mind, the phrase of the melody, this I endeavor,—and the words. Though of words he make to be distinguished only these: “Pass me not, O gentle Saviour!”

Already it will have flash upon me what I am to do. Accordingly I am very busy to rehearse within myself the phrases of broken melody, that I may not lose them.

They shall be the key to the riddle given into my hand,—it is thus the voice of hope discourses to me.

What, then, is my purpose? To write, forthwith, to a house which deal in musical merchandise. I shall ask have they a song which comprises the word, “Pass me not, O gentle Saviour!” together with these bits of melody. For I have noted them down, rudely.

But for my experiment I shall wait till the moon is once more as she shall be to-night,—in short, till the 13 of October.

We shall see.

14 of October.

The hour has become 4 o'clock in the morning,—I have not sleep. I must write. The necessity is upon me. To the deaf pages of the paper I may at all events tell my joy.

Joy!

Last night is the destined time, 13 of October. How was the moon? Precisely as before, the evening lovely, very soft.

Of late my boy—should I say he was sunk back? At any rate, he gave himself to sleeping. When he was eaten, it is his way to stretch himself upon the couch. When he is not by, I have shift the couch, little by little, till it is by the window of the east. Last night it was so. After our supper Jacques lay there. I observe him. He stare into the face of the moon, the moon shine strongly upon him. In such wise he fell to sleep.

The music was obtain. With it I prepare myself, very privately. It is for two voices. Very well, however. My own shall be one, the viol's shall be the other. By last night all is readiness.

The moon rise higher. It is now time.

I draw near to the couch. I touch the viol tenderly. I sing.

What? First a flutter of his eye. Then his lip will part, while a small moan is uttered. He stir, shiver.

He wakes! I see him at one glance. He wake altogether,—the soul of him, the soul of him! Through his eye I behold his soul,—it is awake, as formerly,—no, more than formerly, more than ever. The godlike part, prostrate a little ago, now stand up. It look out to me with the light of reason.

Tears! There are many tears. Many of these are mine. I do not finish the song. I cannot. Besides, what need? I place the viol in its corner. I gather my boy to my bosom. I kiss him.

After all, we are both Frenchmen, are we not?

He will say much, at once,—full of memory grown awake. But I restrain him.

Myself: "Not now. When you have sleep and refresh yourself. To-morrow, let us say."

Jacques: "To-morrow I perhaps do not remember!"

It is the look of fear in his face, as one haunted. I consider. Was his waking only the rift in the cloud, which will presently close up darkly? No, no! Of a sureness the sky was cleared.

Myself: "Be not afraid. You will remember."

Ah, the danger is not that. Out of the quagmire of idiocy he have emerge. But on his other hand there will yawn the gulf of insanity. It is but a narrow way for him. The reminiscence which are to excite, the painful, it may be,—these we will leave for awhile.

I disclose frankly. I say: "It is perilous. Do not hasten, lest you stumble. There is danger to fall far."

He is trouble. He say: "I shall not go back into forgetfulness?"

I say: "No, unless you make yourself too wrought up."

He was willing to sleep, at length, but his exaltation was great,—not until hours did he grow tranquil. His thought mounted, to burst out. To keep him from talking, I talked, I chattered.

I told stories, of Europe. I recall so many I was surprise to myself. Some were ludicrous. Some were concerning adventures.

He sleeps. Between 4 & 5 of the A. M.

7 of November.

No slip in the quagmire. Nor plunge in the gulf on the other hand. So far he walks safely his path.

He ceases to grow fat. But will he grow too thin? Already there is a meagerness in his face.

To-day I have persuade him to walk in the wood

with me. I bade him carry his club to kill us a partridge. There was no partridge, but a rabbit sprang up, only a few feet away. Jacques let throw his club, yet he was not at all near to hitting the beast. I could have thrown better myself. He laugh, he do not pick up the club. I bring it home. If he shall take it never more in his hand, I shall be no surprise.

The Indian may well have departed out of him. In short, I shall surmise him to have depart. The intellect comes into its own. The godlike glows, to scatter the inward fog, until he is more intellectual. The thought runs clear. He will grope for the word, but the thought runs clear like the water brook. Or am I wrong?

If only the frail body may bear up. I observe him narrowly. I have apprehension of the bones of his jaw, they are too much seen, while the great artery of his neck, it is as should all his blood be drive to his brain at once.

He remembers to tell me much. I am informed who the bishop was, and who Nora. I am not mistaking. The lady was but the bishop's servant. An affair of the heart, it shall be outside the question. For Jacques, the woman is the man who is not so tall, and moreover wears skirts,—not else.

18 of November.

He will tell me of far time. It is long since the voice began calling him. First it was an uneasiness, no more. The other boys would eat their fill, be content, wish for nothing. He was never content. He wish for something, he know not what,—for not knowing he shall be the more uneasy. Once a missionary come to the camp where he was live. The

missionary preach. The call was more plain. The missionary hold up his Bible. The voice call to Jacques: "Take it!" He take the Bible. He run away. That is the Bible he bring to me, saying: "You will make me read in this book!" The voice command him, or he fancy it command him.

To read! That trouble him very much. He scan the page,—it was to his eye the book of seven seals. The voice command, reproach,—he is in a frenzy.

He ask a man he meet, how shall he read? The man will bid him go to school. He ask another man. Again the school. Where is the school? He ask that,—he is directed.

So he enter the school.

Then the Poor Farm,—and the creature.

How happen he to stay there? For the curious reason,—while the creature live, the voice no longer command, no longer reproach him.

He knows himself greatly more clearly, since last he awaken. He declares: "It is my father's business, —to serve. I serve Sam Jackson. The voice was still. Rest in serving."

So much he have been near to discern before. Especially, the day he visit the bishop. That day he was almost grasp himself, what he mean. But the bishop put him off, so that he go away in confusion.

Also with the Jesuits. He would become a Jesuit. In the purpose was peace. But presently the night fell on him.

Singular!

Never night so black. He will recall all else,—it is still lost to him how that night came. He was in a vast crowd of persons, Father Peter hovered over him, on black wings, like a bat,—such the picture in

his memory. He shivers. He much would wish not to think of it.

He is full of his meaning. He will explain to me volubly. I lose myself in amazement for his manner. His idea, it reaches me not.

11 of December.

His idea, do I comprehend this, even yet? If I comprehend the idea of the boy, that which he meditates is, in brief, revolution.

The idea was born an instinct,—it was the voice which he heard, vaguely to command him, to reproach him. But now, since he awakens, he will examine his instinct, to construct of it the idea.

He fancies he will justify, will by the letter of the Scripture discover his idea to be right.

He argues: "Will you accuse Jesus of teaching two moralities?"

Two moralities, then. Consider! Morality No. 1, and Morality No. 2, so to speak.

First, Morality No. 1. This is taught in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Jacques insists: "In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus informs the lawyer it is enough if he will love his neighbor as he loves himself. Does he not?"

I bow. For when I read the parable, it is so.

Very well! But wait,—there is yet the Morality No. 2. This is taught in the passage of St. John (*inter alia*) where Jesus say: "Follow me!"

To follow Jesus, what is it?

Jacques cries: "It is to love your neighbor better, a great deal better, than you love yourself! Jesus was all for his neighbor. For himself he was nothing."

What then? Listen,—the idea of the boy is here.

Jacques: "Nevertheless, no! Jesus taught one morality, no more. If you would be moral, follow the Good Samaritan. But if you would be a disciple, a minister in Jesus, follow Jesus. To follow Jesus, that would make you not more moral, but it would make you a pastor, a shepherd to feed the sheep."

He will impose upon the minister, then, the especial sacrifice? Precisely.

But here I ask him: "To what end, my boy? Why make the clergy go more far than the laity?"

To which he make me answer: "Bishop Welcome followed Jesus. He was more than to love his neighbor as himself. He love himself not, his neighbor all. What happen? A soul is saved, namely, the soul of Jean Valjean. Do you deny?"

I smile. I say: "It is a romance!"

He reply: "Be it so. But fancy yourself to meet Bishop Welcome, to see him, to speak with him,—how will you not be affected, how will you not be better? Merely to read about him, is it not to make you more full of goodness, of good will?"

True! I will myself, at times, when bitterness shall be in me, take up the book, to read of the good bishop, and behold! the bitterness have gone before I am aware.

Jacques: "In such he follow Jesus. He could be moral, yet do less. But he follow Jesus."

Furthermore:

"Whoever shall do in a like manner, he also shall make goodness to enter the hearts of men."

25 of December.

For unto them there was born this day, in the city of David, a King!

Much have we spoken. Do I grasp what my boy will mean?

I venture: "The Church teaches Jesus to mean every man to be his disciple, every man to follow him. What better will you have?"

But no! He open the gospel of St. Luke, who heard Jesus say: "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and children, and brother and sister, yea, and his own life, also, he cannot be my disciple."

He demands: "If every man be so, what will become of society, of the progress of the race, of civilization? Whoever will be the disciple of Jesus, he is command to be empty of all selfishness,—not a part, but all. But with selfishness begin our progress. It is the spring of our civilization. Without it all should be upset. No, no! Only the few shall be empty of this,—the few chosen to be ministers."

Somewhat so he argues. If not his words, it is the sum of what he will propose, I should surmise.

Perplexing, to me. I inquire: "To what end? If the selfishness shall be the beginning of progress, the spring of the civilization, why shall it be emptied out of any, even of the chosen ones?"

His reply, in effect: "The few are sacrifice for the good of the many, even as Jesus was. As did he, so will they, crucify the self, in order that the self in others shall be subdued."

Myself: "But since selfishness is so admirable, being the spring of the civilization, wherefore shall you subdue it?"

Jacques: "Like the wild horse which needs to be break, to have the rein. The good minister, who shall follow Jesus, he put in the hand of men the rein, for to check the selfishness."

I am silent. If I do not grasp, it is perhaps not wonderful. Who shall grasp this boy?

Now he opens a book. It is the essays of the Englishman, Matthew Arnold. There is something concerning St. Francis,—his celebrated marriage with poverty.

Jacques: "He crucified the self, by that. What did he gain?"

He will read from the book: "When an Umbrian town or village heard of his approach, the whole population went out in joyful procession to meet him, with green boughs, flags, music, & the songs of gladness."

Together with a passage which say of St. Francis:

"He was a figure of the most magical power & charm."

Jacques declares: "Magical? Not! Natural! Any man who shall do as St. Francis have done, he too shall have precisely the power & the charm. What have St. Francis done? Briefly, he has follow Jesus, —no more, no less. He crucify the self."

Once more, from that book, he will read: "The mass of mankind can be carried along a course full of hardship for the natural man, can be borne over the thousand impediments of the narrow way, only by the tide of a joyful & bounding emotion."

Jacques, exclaiming: "Emotion, joyful & bounding! That it is. To teach his ministers how to give mankind that emotion, Jesus came on earth. For

such the word was made flesh,—& the word was ‘Follow me!’ ”

I am silent. Do I grasp him?

16 of January.

This, at least, is clear,—he will break with tradition. Is such the wise part?

I propose: “You break abruptly with tradition. Tradition shall be against you. Tradition is power. You shall not sweep it away. You shall better compromise with it.”

He is not for the compromise. So much I see, though he say nothing.

Myself: “The half loaf is better than none. You will fly in the face of accepted notion. What is religion, to the common mind? It is precisely worship, the ceremony. You make nothing of worship and of ceremony. What shall the ordinary man say of you, thereupon? Precisely that you have no religion whatever. Who shall grasp you, when you call for no faith, no duties, no conscious obedience to a law,—when, in brief, you leave all things to be wrought by a love coming into the heart no man know whence or know how?”

Jacques: “The ordinary man has no need to know. All is done for him. Only the minister need know, since he does all. I shall teach the minister. Him will I recall to the more excellent way.”

Myself, with impatience: “The bishop in the city, did you teach him?”

He is silent.

Myself: “He make answer to you for why he live in a palace & ride in his coach. These things shall be customary. It is so. Custom is everything. It

is so much that he will always believe you a madman. There is no teaching in such manner."

Jacques: "I was not myself sure. Vision was not yet come to me. I will do better."

"No, never!" I declare.

But now, finally, I broach the good Bishop Welcome:

"Did he throw tradition to the wind? Not he. He did the customary,—all that which a minister shall be expected to do. He is ready to yield the half of a loaf for getting the remainder. He celebrate the mass each day, though he may well believe it mummery. He preach the sermon, though they shall have sound in his own ear like the brass and the cymbal. He pray,—why not? It may do no harm, at all events. He hear confession,—he give absolution, all the while in doubt if he have the power to bind and to loose. He make himself a minister in the old way,—after that in the more excellent way of which you speak. Not by the mass did he save Jean Valjean,—certainly no. Yet why shall he despise the mass, the most ancient of ceremony, the most honored among men? If it shall be empty, useless, what harm? What have he show you? That one may be a bishop, yet deny himself & take up his cross daily, even as Jesus commanded. Go thou & do in a like fashion."

What do I mean? Precisely that he shall first of all become a minister in the accepted sense, one known as a minister, one whom the world will call Reverend. By this he will come in a position to exemplify his idea.

He wavers. Whatso Bishop Welcome have done, that is much to him.

Yet he thinks of going back to the city, as formerly.

He says: "I will seek out Father Peter. Him I shall persuade."

The oath-bound Jesuit? Not likely!

3 of March.

A letter from the Esquire Thornhill permits hope. Mr. Thornhill deems it possible.

The church is Unitarian, once strong, now weak, and no settled pastor is over it.

The Unitarians make no nice points,—any strong, clean, leading man, say the esquire.

Well, as to that, Jacques is strong, he is clean, he is leading.

He have consent. The necessity to think of custom, he perceives this. The Unitarian will demand no mass, no confession,—it is more easy for him than for Bishop Welcome.

BOOK V
MR. JAKES

CHAPTER I

DINNER OF HERBS

INDULGE a pagan fancy,—it will help you to a notion of Afton. Figure life as a pool, and events as stones tossed thereinto by the Fates. Wherever in the pool a stone drops, there is a heaving up to send waves spreading in every direction. The bigger the stone the more the upheaval, of course, and the stronger the waves go out; but even the biggest of stones will not stir all life. No matter how high the waters are raised in the first instance, they will shortly subside. Only a little way off, and the impulse is already well spent. Only a little further, and the face of the pool is unrippled.

There are places in the pool where no stone to speak of has ever fallen, and where there have come from abroad but the faintest shocks and thrills.

Afton was one of these,—very much so.

Languid infirmity of purpose, that was the prevailing note,—you caught it even in the attitude of the two roads which conjointly gave Afton locality, for they seemed to have been about to cross only to abandon the enterprise at the last moment in favor of an easier alternative. Anyway, one of them came to an end on the spot, as if it were positively too shiftless to go on. This was the Tellerville road, too, and by

that important. Tellerville, six miles away, was the nearest railway station and the way thence was Afton's outlook on the world. And still there was a dignity about its manner of giving up separate existence, like a great river disemboguing, in two branches, with a delta between, to form the civic center about which the village gathered in a loose and informal manner. Nobody called it the civic center,—locally it was but a patch of nettles so stalwart that the birds of the air built nests in them; but it amounted to that,—it would be a civic center wherever sociology and its terms were understood. The corporate limits comprehended a square mile, more or less, and in a negligent, sprawling fashion the inhabitants occupied so much territory. There was plenty of room,—each house had its garden and there were detached fields besides, not to mention stretches of commons where everybody staked out his cow.

A hot, dry spring it has been,—the like of it never known. And to-day is a hot dry day; already, though the hour is early, the sun is fierce and Afton simmers. In the postoffice fronting the delta Byron the postmaster and Daniel the pensioner are a-discussin' and a-contendin'. They are alone,—the population at large is still detained at home.

You should know more about Daniel, partly for his own sake, but especially for the further notion of Afton you will obtain. On that consideration it is noteworthy that Daniel had lost his right arm in the service of his country; that the republic, flatly contradicting the proverbial nature of its kind, was so grateful as to remember him with a check for \$150 every quarter; and, finally, that such an income settled and secure in virtue of Uncle Sam's good word, consti-

tuted Daniel, in a financial sense, the great man of the vicinity. Nobody else had so large an income. Squire Thornhill would no doubt wish the world to believe him in the enjoyment of a larger, but the world was not to be beguiled by mere hints to that effect. Who ever saw Squire Thornhill with as much as \$150, cash money, in his hand? Who, furthermore, did not know, or as good as know, that Squire Thornhill was land poor, that his taxes were eating him up, that there was a mortgage on his very home? Let those who chose believe a mortgage the sign of fiscal tact,—Afton, at all events, would swallow no such heresy; the village recognized its magnate, and he was Daniel. Respected? Daniel's arm had been shattered by a ball which caught him at the point of the elbow, and you and I, being strangers, might wonder, for a moment, how a man facing the enemy could get a shot at the point of his elbow; but Afton found no difficulty. Not a man or a boy was there who couldn't tell us the way of it, how that Daniel, charging gallantly at Antietam, felt something wrong with his collar behind, reached back over his head to fix the thing, and in that posture was shot. If you saw a man or a boy, in Afton, earnestly conversing with some stranger, the while he reached over his head for his collar behind, the chances were that he had undertaken to show just how Daniel came by his wound. It was worth while,—the patriot's credit was a public concern, a matter vital to the commonwealth; nobody should go away doubting that the pension which made Afton opulent was well and truly earned.

For some minutes, now, this considerable man had sat silent in the doorway, with his eyes fixed on the delta opposite. The sun poured itself brilliantly over

the white sand of the street, and Daniel screwed up his face prodigiously against the glare.

At length he spoke. "Notice how that there patch o' nettles hain't a-startin' up so pert this spring?"

Byron hadn't noticed, no,—that is, not special.

Daniel went on, weightily, after a suggestive pause. "If that there patch o' nettles hain't smaller'n 'twas this time a year ago, then I'm a goat."

Delicately put, to be sure. Before he made choice between these alternatives, a man who was not only postmaster with various political elements to please, but general storekeeper, as well, with a trade to think of,—such a man need have a care. Byron screwed up his face and looked long and critically. "Shouldn't wonder if maybe you ain't right," he remarked.

"What does it mean?" demanded Daniel.

Byron coughed. "Dry weather, eh?"

"Dry weather your foot!" snorted Daniel, contemptuously. "Dry weather might make the nettles smaller,—'twouldn't never make the patch smaller. Do you want to know what it means? It means the road's widenin' out with the traffic. There's more teams comin' in, an' they're comin' oftener. That's what it means. 'Nother year," the spirit of prophecy seized the oracle, "an' I shouldn't be noways surprised if there wa'n't a nettle left over yonder. Now what if Afton was to hev a boom,—a reg'ler, downright, ripsnortin' boom! Hey?"

Byron took time to think and his reply was guarded. "Don't know's I'd want to see a reg'ler, downright, ripsnortin' boom in Afton. Chicago always claimed they was wuss off for the boom they had."

"Chicago hain't Afton," declared Daniel, and with that the subject was exhausted.

There ensued a silence broken only by the hum of some early flies. It was a sleepy stillness, and the warmth was sleepy, and shortly the pensioner dozed off, and swayed unsteadily in his seat, with his head sunk on his breast. Byron, meanwhile, busied himself behind the counter till a new vein of conversation occurred to him.

"Hear 'bout Link Peffer a-gittin' him a telegram?" he called out, from the inner regions.

Daniel opened his eyes with a jerk. "Link Peffer?" he repeated incredulously.

"Link Peffer!

"You mean Abe Peffer!"

"No, Link,—Abe's youngest boy."

"Link? Why, Link he hain't scurcely a voter yet."

"Well, he got the telegram, whether or no. I see it myself. Tronson fetched it over from Tellerville with the mail, a Wednesday, jest as Link happened up with his new Clyde stallion, in a sulky. 'Link,' says Tronson, 'here's a telegram for ye.' 'That so?' says Link, not a mite flustered, an' he took it an' opened it an' read it, an' drove off cool's you please, sayin' never a word to nobody, though there was consid'ble many stan'in' round, wonderin'."

Daniel listened attentively. "Want to know!" he exclaimed, when Byron had told all. "Beats all how the young fellers is comin' to the front. Link was always a smart boy, though. I reckon he's one of the virtuousest young men in these parts."

"Talk of him runnin' for sheriff, come fall."

"No! He'd make a good sheriff, too. Still, I dunno what Eph Holiday'd do if they was to 'lect somebody else sheriff. How long's Eph been sheriff anyhow? Must be twenty years."

"S' long's that? Guess maybe so, come to think. Time does git away. Blame me if it don't."

There was no blaming Byron on that showing, and so another subject was exhausted. The drowsy silence came on once more, and once more the pensioner was nodding off to sleep, when the entrance of a third person created a fresh diversion. Rather an unusual figure, this person was,—a youngish man, with flat chest and broad shoulders, a hatchet face, and (these the especially unusual about him) lustrous dark eyes and a profusion of curling brown hair. His garb was that of a workingman rather hard pressed to make both ends meet,—nothing to single him out in Afton where distinction in dress was almost entirely left to the women; and his manner had in it that accent of conscious apology which denotes a lack of social advantages—it seemed to cost him an effort so much as to give Daniel and Byron good morning.

"Letter for you, I'm thinkin'," said the postmaster, adjusting his glasses to study an address critically. "The Reverend James J-a-c-q-u-e-s, Jakes,—that the way you pronounce it?"

The man hesitated a little, smiled faintly and nodded. "That's my name. Thank you," and he took the letter and turned to go.

Daniel was staring up in frank curiosity. "Hot," he said.

"Rather," said the man.

"An' dry."

"Pretty dry, I should say." There was an accent in his speech, and a halting, as if the English language came hard to him.

"Don't 'pear so anything's sufferin', though."

"Oh, no!"

"We kin stand a dry spell better in May than in July. That's what I tell 'em."

The man replied, but he was already out of the door and in full retreat, so that his meaning was lost. Evidently he wasn't wishful to make talk.

"That," said Byron, when they had watched him out of sight, "is the new Unitarian minister."

"So I was a-conjecturin'," said Daniel. "Looks like he might be a good, clever feller, too. No airs, anyway. Queer fish, some say. They tell me he don't ask no pay."

"Fact. My wife's half-brother he goes to church there, an' he admits they don't hev to pay Mr. Jakes nothin'. He won't take no pay, as I understand."

"Reckon he hain't a-goin' to have no scuffle with 'em on that 'count," observed Daniel. "Last minister they hed couldn't git his pay nohow."

"That was Sanborn."

"Sanborn."

"Tur'ble homely feller. So homely you couldn't scurcely meet him without wantin' to holler for help." This was pretty severe for Byron and he looked rather frightened. "Course a man hain't noways to blame for his looks," he added, deprecatingly.

"They've got some right smart womenfolks in their church, I'll say that for 'em."

"They hev so, for a fact."

"Nothin' but the womenfolks kep' the buildin' from goin' to rack an' ruin long ago. The women worked hard but the men was too shif'less to pay the parson. Guess they was glad to find somebody to take the place for nothin'."

"Squire Thornhill speaks high of him."

"That ought to settle it. Squire's the king-pin, 'cording to his own reckonin', anyway."

"Squire's a great Unitarian. He kin tell why he's a Unitarian, an' that's more'n some of 'em kin do. My wife's half-brother he calls himself a Unitarian, but he couldn't tell you what Unitarians believe in, not to save his gizzard." Who, even the keeper of a general store, need hesitate to have positive opinions of his wife's half-brother?

"How's this here Reverend Mr. Jakes a-goin' to live?" asked Daniel. "Got prop'ty, has he?"

"'Pears not. He's took the Widder Delmore place, an' it's quite a spell now since there was anybody hereabouts that didn't feel above the Widder Delmore place. Never was much, an' now it's all to pieces. Old cabin's 'bout fell down, an' the well's caved in, an' there hain't a rod o' fence stan'in'. Land's all run out, course. He expects to make a livin' outen it, but I don't see how. Squire Thornhill was in to see me yist'day, an' he ast me if I wouldn't trust Mr. Jakes for what little he'd be a-wantin', till he could git suthin' to growin'. I'll own up I wa'n't anxious for the trade, an' still I couldn't somehow come out flatfooted an' refuse a newcomer, so. 'Sides, I was brought up to treat a minister a leetle better'n other folks. Course Mr. Jakes is Unitarian, an' my folks was brimstone orthodox an' hated a liberal wuss'n pizen, but I can't be a-drawin' the line,—a minister's a minister. I do feel like doin' Mr. Jakes a good turn, when it comes my way. He'll likely hev trouble 'nough afore he's gone far, 'thout me addin' to it. Blame me if I don't feel kinder sorry for the feller, though it's none o' my funeral either. Seems like a hard place he's dropped into."

Daniel laughed saturninely. "Jest you wait till the squire gits his wind an' starts in to run things. I dassay the Reverend Mr. Jakes will wonder where he's at, 'thout he's uncommon good at knucklin' down."

This was treacherous ground and Byron would have none of it.

"An' all them women!" said Daniel. "Is he married?"

Byron understood not. Leastways there was nothing said about any family.

"The Lord have mercy on his soul!" exclaimed Daniel. "Poor Jakes!" and he laughed again, more saturninely.

CHAPTER II

A STRANGER, AND THEY TOOK HIM IN

HUNGER is a large fact where scarcity prevails, and curiosity, that hunger of the spirit, was a large fact in Afton,—not unnaturally the Unitarian church, on the occasion of Mr. Jakes's inaugural, sheltered the greatest congregation in its history. As much as anybody knew about the new minister, everybody knew, as a matter of course; and that was enough to rivet public attention upon him. Those who had set down the man's vagaries to a species of mild madness, though they should politely name it eccentricity, could discover a method in it, when they beheld the crowd which poured into the old church that Sabbath morning,—had his whole purpose been to bring wandering sheep gaping to his feet, he could not possibly have gone a better way to work. Squire Thornhill and the lesser pillars who acted with him as ushers were filled with a great joy. They chuckled and rubbed their hands, in sober Sabbath glee, while they showed the thronging multitude to seats. Did they not count twenty-seven farmers' teams hitched near the church? There was a rail provided for farmers to hitch to, and it had always been sufficient, even in the remote early days of prosperity, yet now it was all taken up and

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still teams were coming. But it was when chairs had to be fetched from nearby houses and set in the aisles, that the pillars' cup ran over. They foresaw a wonderful revival of religion in Afton. They stood up, themselves, throughout the service, and were mightily glad of the necessity.

But what of Mr. Jakes meanwhile? Was his cup running over?

There was a little vestry, or more properly, since Unitarians don't vest, a study,—anyway a place where the pastor might lurk and wait until his hour was come; and thither the new incumbent had betaken himself long before the earliest of the public put in an appearance. But if there was any joy for him, it lay under too heavy a cloud of anxiety to be discernible. He was vastly uneasy,—roved up and down the narrow room, sat down to the table, where his papers and a book or two lay, only to toss and squirm as if the chair were a hot griddle. When the congregation came in, stragglingly at first, but soon in a steady, abundant stream, his distress mounted by leaps and bounds, as his tortured air bore all too ample testimony. He opened the door leading into the church until he could see through the crack, and he stood in behind there, to peep furtively, while his knees smote together and the sweat collected on his forehead. The strange faces, staring blankly up at the pulpit where he was presently to take his place, how should he ever summon strength to look into them? Mr. Jakes was very badly scared,—that was the simple truth. That consciousness of himself which he had been coming into all these months was discovering its least comfortable phase, a bashfulness almost too much for will and reason to overbear.

He sank into his seat and clutched up a scrap of paper, on which were written, in Dr. Robert's largest, plainest hand, these words and figures :

1. Hymn.
2. Prayer.
3. Hymn.
4. Sermon.
5. Hymn.
6. Benediction.

It was the simple program of the simplest service which convention would countenance, and yet it baffled Mr. Jakes. He conned it over for the hundredth time, and was no nearer mastering it than before, trifling though it was. And then, for the hundredth time, a rebellion rose in him. Why should he have a program? Why should he be tied down to any sort of form, even the simplest? He had been pointed to Savonarola, who was a great preacher, fit to be imitated. But Savonarola had gone his own way about the business, flouting custom, and ceremony, and programs, delivering his message as best it suited him. Mr. Jakes had a message, too,—why should he not go his own way about the delivery of it? Those people yonder, they were nothing to fear, in themselves, met with informally; but there was something very terrifying about them as they sat stiffly awaiting his coming. It was like going up to the rack, wretchedly like. Mr. Jakes threw the scrap of paper back on the table and groaned.

The study was furnished with a cheap little clock which ticked explosively,—Mr. Jakes could swear it was going too fast. He could see the hands move, so ardent was his wish to have them stand still; as

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they approached the fateful mark of half past ten, they fairly ran forward. He persuaded himself that the little clock was at least fifteen minutes ahead of the correct time, and had just formed the resolution to wait until quarter of eleven when his comfortable illusion was miserably scattered by the bell in the Catholic steeple, booming out its solemn call. That meant only one thing,—it was already half past ten! The hour had struck, and no more was to be done save that which he had come to do. He staggered to his feet. He snatched up his papers and books. He threw open the door. He entered.

Curiosity isn't of necessity an unfriendly sentiment, yet neither is it sweet sympathy; Afton, or that considerable fraction of it which had come out for to see, turned its countenance on Mr. Jakes with the first creak of the door which announced him, and it was a countenance little calculated to soothe his troubled heart, already near choking him with a tumult of emotion. To him it seemed that he spent his last strength in tottering up the few steps leading to the pulpit, and he fell into the stuffed chair set out for his use in a state bordering on collapse. He had been earnestly instructed to kneel, for a moment, in silent prayer, as he entered his pulpit; Dr. Robert had once seen a famous divine do that, and it had struck him as a happy touch,—theatrical, perhaps, but highly effective, a thing likely to disarm the critical and warm the devout, to affect for the better both those who came to scoff and those who came to pray. Mr. Jakes had no objection, and he had fully intended to kneel, that way, but he forgot all about it until the proper time was passed. Then the thought of his omission brought on a new terror. If he had forgotten that, what might

he not forget? Sitting sunk among the cushions, he gave himself up to despair.

He imagined he was making a sorry spectacle, but in that he was wrong,—the people beheld a youth not more embarrassed than a youth may properly be, in the face of a great occasion. He believed he had reeled up the steps like a drunken man, but they found his gait creditably firm. His thought was that his face proclaimed his weakness, but they detected only a comely heightening of his color, a comely glow in his eyes. Mr. Jakes's eyes were something to remember, so fine and lustrous were they, so filled with a steady fire; and there was moreover his hair. Afton, for the most part, had not yet seen him with his hat off, and the wanton clustering curls, thick and golden-brown, were something to remember, too. Many called him handsome.

His attire,—well, for that matter, Afton, to be perfectly candid, was rather shocked by Mr. Jakes's attire. It was still that garb of a man who worked with his hands. Linen, starch,—could there be theology apart from these? The memory of the ministers who had formerly stood in that pulpit had not passed away, and how had they dressed for their part? Even that last unhappy minister, whose salary was only \$30 a month and the bulk of that meager sum delinquent,—even he wore a long black coat with flaring skirts and spreading bosom faced with silk at the lapels, and a linen shirt, and a lawn tie. And here had come a minister in a coarse gray flannel shirt, with a coat which was a blouse, hardly to be distinguished from a jumper, and trousers which looked for all the world like kersey such as Byron sold for \$3 and you could get for \$2 in the city. And his shoes, would you believe that they were

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not blacked? Believe it or not, such was the fact. They were very conspicuous by reason of their brown dinginess. Stewing among his cushions, Mr. Jakes mechanically threw one leg over the other, and by that fairly flaunted his shoes in Afton's face. It was a long day before the circles of society ceased to comment on those shoes.

Stewing among his cushions, Mr. Jakes looked down at the people and asked himself whether they would leave him sunk in his chair and go away, or whether they would come and lift him out; it was impossible, he was convinced, that he should rise unaided. But once more he was wrong. The choir, a dozen or fifteen boys and girls, were gathered about the organ to the left of the pulpit, and now the leader, a dapper person of the tenor species, came tripping up the steps with his list of hymns. He bowed deferentially, and Mr. Jakes, while he didn't bow back, from a feeling of being frozen stiff, nevertheless received him with what passed for dignity and grace sufficient, and took the slip of paper from his hand. The congregation watched narrowly and came off with the impression that the new minister knew his manners,—he lost nothing by not being gushy. And then Mr. Jakes astonished himself alone of all that assemblage by getting up and going to the desk and giving out the first hymn. He remained standing there during the singing, and even joined in, though the tune was unfamiliar.

But hereupon there was the prayer to be offered up. That was about the hardest of all. Commanded of convention to pray, he had suffered a prayer to be composed for him, and had learned it by heart. He fancied he knew it well enough to say it backwards, yet now, in the very midst of it, his memory played him false.

He had got so far as to call down the divine favor on the nation, and all nations, and the rulers thereof, and the next thing was the fruits of the earth, always to be given attention in a farming community,—and right there, all at once, he could think of nothing but the flowery sentences with which he was to end. Of course it would never do to end so abruptly. He paused, and repeated himself, a phrase or two. He opened his eyes a little and searched among the papers on the desk before him,—the prayer was there, written out against the chance of just such a mishap. What possessed the paper that it should so refuse to be brought to the surface when wanted? He bowed his head very low, to search the better. His voice, repeating, shook. His knees weakened under him till he wondered to find himself standing. But Afton, glancing discreetly out from under its lowered lids, attributed everything to Mr. Jakes's earnestness having overcome him. Beautiful prayer, people called it ever after; and the break served only to heighten the effect. For it was merely a break, at worst,—the right paper was presently found and the prayer finished according to the letter of it.

They sang another hymn, hearty and uplifting, and after that came the sermon.

Mr. Jakes took his text from John 15:13. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Alone in his cabin miles away, Dr. Robert was not unmindful. He too had watched the clock uneasily, with a tumult of anxiety oppressing him when at last it pointed to half past ten. He too paced up and down, or squirmed and tossed in his chair, and hoped,—prayed, even, with all the fervor of his fervid soul,

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that his boy might not forget; that he might not stand here when he should stand there, or strike his desk with his clenched fist when he should be spreading his palm upward, or shout when he should whisper. Could the doctor have known that Mr. Jakes forgot almost all his instructions, even to the words of his manuscript in many instances, doubt not he would have torn his hair, believing all was lost. Yet nothing was lost.

Mr. Jakes had by his manner, though unwittingly, much increased the public curiosity as to what he might be about to say; and this would make people attentive to begin with. But when curiosity should be spent, what? The leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy has a fashion of flowering in the fine art of seeming to listen, of having ears yet hearing not,—and in that art men and women who go much to church become very adept. But the sensitive preacher is not fooled,—he will look into the souls of his congregation through their eyes and know if those souls are dozing; and if they are dozing he will be cast down and say his say but hardly. Mr. Jakes, most sensitive of men, most ready to be cast down, was spared. He looked through the windows of Afton's souls and they were awake from first to last. The curiosity helped, but when it had served, there was a better sentiment to take its place. He hadn't gone far with his sermon until it appeared that the people had been laid hold of.

And their listening attitude laid hold of him. He was lucky to be sensitive, for in virtue of that he was lifted up into a complete forgetfulness of studied posturings. There was a moment of stiff indecision, a little of struggle to recall his cues, and then he threw off the make-believe altogether. The bashfulness vanished,—he not only looked but was at ease. He spoke

like a confident child, anyway as unaffectedly ; and like a child's by its sheer simplicity, his discourse carried. The people, by their interest, made him sincere, and he, by his sincerity, made them interested.

CHAPTER III

MR. JAKES'S PARABLE

“ONCE upon a time, and not so long ago,” said Mr. Jakes, and his speech, for this occasion, was uncommonly free from French accent and French inversions, “there lived, and died, for it is only as he dies that we get to know him, a certain William Phipps. He was a negro, a lowly member of a lowly race. Many have thought, and some still think that the negro was created to be the slave of the white man, but whether that is so or not, negroes have always been slaves, even to our own time; for though the name of slavery is abolished, its substance remains,—the position of negroes in society is little if any above servitude. What we have done to make an end of slavery we seemingly did for the good of the whites whom it corrupted, rather than the good of the blacks whom it oppressed. In some ways the negro is worse off for being emancipated,—no emancipation at the hands of the law can relieve him of the yoke of caste. He is still the hewer of wood and drawer of water. He is proscribed and excluded from the fields of activity where the human soul develops and grows, and that is the hopelessness of his situation. It is a sorry thing to be born black; a man born black has reason, humanly speaking, to grow up bitter in heart, and sour, and

sullen. He is confronted from the first by a dark outlook. His place in the world is made for him and it is a hard place. He feels the supremest injustice which a man is ever called on to endure,—the injustice of being punished for what is no fault of his. And the punishment has none of the appearance of being an act of Providence, inevitable and therefore to be borne in patience; it is too clearly the tyranny of his own kind. If he has any spirit at all, why should he not be an Ishmael, with his hand against every man?

“Phipps is less than forty years old, when we come upon him, living and dying. What does that signify? It signifies that though a negro, he was born legally free, to as much freedom as the mere law can bestow. A boon, we say, at first blush,—Phipps was lucky as compared with his parents, who were born chattels, like cattle. But is that altogether so? Consider a little. A negro boy born into slavery was subject to restraint, of a poor sort, to be sure but better than none. Sprung from a healthy race, he was pretty sure to be a healthy boy, stout and hearty, having in him all the appetites of the virile animal. In slavery these appetites were brought under bit and bridle. The boy was early set to work, and kept working. At five years of age he was picking cotton by his mother’s side, or helping her to hoe her row. By the time he was come to the age of fourteen or fifteen, the age when the masculine element in a boy begins to stir, he was a laborer in the fields, toiling from the earliest dawn till the fall of darkness, too tired to think of aught but eating and sleeping. His were none of the idle hands which Satan finds work for. And should by any chance his virile appetites nevertheless get the better of him, should he permit his passions, the passions which

are as natural to the human youth as to any male animal whatsoever, to assert themselves and carry him beyond the limits of prescribed conduct, he was whipped for it, his spirit broken, his passions subdued. That was a wretched condition, to be sure, a woeful degradation, yet after all it amounted to a moral control,—in slavery the negro had some reason, though no very good one, to behave himself.

“But how was it after the war? In the warm Southland, where a living costs almost no effort, these black people, made irresponsible by their centuries of servitude until they were fairly incapable of taking thought of the morrow, brought forth their young like the beasts, and let them grow up like beasts, with hardly more care for their morals than cattle have, or any other species of unmoral beings. In place of the moral restraint, or semblance thereof, degraded and hideous though it was, which slavery had laid upon the negro boy, there was nothing, absolutely nothing. The boy was born and grew up in his own way. He was as much as ever the offspring of a healthy race, physically perfect, like a young bull. As he advanced in years, idle all the time or engaged in dissolute sports, his virile appetites duly asserted themselves and without resistance on his part took complete command of him and filled him with purposes which, however natural, society has decreed mischievous and criminal. Such is the genesis of that monster in human form which holds the South in a state of terror to-day, so that women dare not stir abroad unprotected and chivalry itself has brought a generous and high-spirited people down to the level of lynchers. All things considered, the wonder is that the young black isn't an even more terrible fellow than he is; but he is

amply terrible enough, as the case stands, to have got his race more than ever proscribed, and that is what we need bear especially in mind as we think of Phipps. He was a young black, with the most odious reputation, regardless of how good he might really be. Knowing how he turned out in the end, we like to imagine that he was a very decent chap to begin with. Perhaps he had religious parents,—there were always religious parents among the negroes; perhaps, too, he was born with less of the elemental brute in him than goes to make up the average healthy man. But no matter how decent he may have been, no matter how strongly inclined to proper ways, the hue of his face would get him confounded with the worst. The character of the worst was the character of the best. A negro buck was a negro buck,—a thing accursed.

“Put yourself in his place. Experiencing such things, what sort of a feeling would you have for your fellow men? Would you be less than bitter and sour and sullen? What did the brotherhood of man mean to Phipps? What influence was that noble principle of conduct likely to have on him,—what influence would it have on you in his place?

“We can guess how the longing to go North took possession of him. It was a common and a natural thing for the negroes to look to the North as to a veritable Canaan. Had not all things conspired to give them the idea that the North was a sort of heaven, where wrong had no place, and all was light, refreshment and peace? Its colder airs they would perhaps not forget to consider, or how little they were fit to undergo its ice and snow and arctic blasts; but what were such discomforts to endure in comparison with the pains of their present position? And so they went

North, as they could, thousands of them, rejoicing to leave behind them the land of bondage. Phipps went North, too,—it is in the North that we find him. He had no money, of course,—he had to walk, unless he stole a ride in some cattle-car. He was not too good to steal,—not keenly alive to the distinctions of right and wrong, or, where he distinguished, zealous to shun the wrong. If he was not by this time in desperate rebellion against the regulations of society, he was at best indifferent to them, ready to transgress them without a qualm. What were the laws of society to him whom society had made an outcast of?

“More likely than not he made his way first to Washington; the home of their great and good government had an especial fascination for those migrating negroes. Washington was a name to conjure with,—the place was a kind of Mecca. If they did not pray night and morning with their faces turned toward Washington, their attitude of mind was something like that. To go and live forevermore in Washington, under the shadow of the Capitol, that were felicity indeed. They did not stop to ask how they should support themselves where there was no soil to till,—they knew not how to take thought of such things. Slavery had so schooled them to an instinct of dependence that they were apt to look upon emancipation as something in the nature of a transfer from one owner to another, a mysterious transaction by which they had passed from the possession of their former masters to the possession of the government. A masterless negro was to them unthinkable, and now their master was the government, whose mansion was in Washington. In such dark, uncertain fashion, we may believe, the negro argued with himself. More than likely our

friend Phipps made his way first to Washington and began there with his disillusionment."

"For disillusionment, sooner or later, awaited every negro who came North in search of the promised land. Instead of being caught to the bosom of a rich and liberal people, as he fondly expected, he found himself as much as ever an object of aversion whom white men shunned and denied employment. White men, unless the most degraded, were ashamed to work with him; only the low work which no white man would do was left for him. That was a new bitterness for the negro,—the South, with all its cruelty, had never treated him so harshly in this respect. If he could not himself remember slavery days, he had heard his people tell about them,—the days when women of his color stood in the position of mothers to the most aristocratic children of the South, and masters there were in plenty who would deny themselves before they would see their dependent blacks denied. Such memories were not likely to make the disillusionment less hard to bear.

"My friends, how do you picture Phipps in your minds? There is a native kindness in the African race. Beyond most men they are sweet of temper, patient to endure, quick to love where any spark of love is vouchsafed them, faithful and willing. But how are we to expect these fine traits to remain, under the trials to which negroes have been subjected since their emancipation? Can we put ourselves in Phipps's place once more, and believe that we should retain a shred of good will toward men?

"For my own part, I cannot but think of him, when first he comes into our view, at the age of nearly forty, as a pretty unpromising fellow. Unless I mistake him,

he is addicted to all the vices which a very poor man can have. I surmise that he is no stranger to the dens where the worst of humanity congregate to seek a fleeting image of pleasure,—the nearest likeness of pleasure permitted to such as they,—in bestial excesses. The greater portion of what he earns goes for vice, for drink most of all. He spends a great deal for drink,—in drink there is forgetfulness, even a certain joy, a fierce exaltation. Gallons and gallons of vile liquor he has drunk, and found this destroyer of mind and body his best friend on earth. It follows almost inevitably that he has been in affrays. There is usually a quarrelsome stage in any man's drunkenness, and not the less so where he is drunk on poison; and these low people scruple not to cut and stab. In their orgies they will fall out over nothing, and fight like fiends. The men among them will become the keenest rivals for the favor of some worthless woman, and then there will be a killing, unless they are sooner parted. Phipps has borne his part in many an affray,—no doubt of that. He has cut and been cut. Possibly he has been a fugitive from justice, slinking out of sight of the police. When I form the likeness of him in my mind, I see sundry scars on his face, and they make it a frightful face. He is called a bad man, that is, a dangerous man. He is often arrested for petty disorders, and taken into court with the dregs. He is always guilty, he never has money to pay a fine, and so he spends a considerable fraction of his life in the workhouse. He doesn't mind that, except that it cuts him off from his solacing vices. Whether in prison or out, he is equally the outcast, loathed and spat upon. White men, even though they are them-

selves of the dregs, object to riding with him in the prison van.

“So much for what we may imagine, building upon the probabilities of the case. Now we come to the realities.

“It is in Cincinnati that we find him. He doesn’t push far north, you see. In the face of his disillusionment there is nothing to draw him further,—he tarries wherever there offers the degraded work which he is allowed to do. He is a fleck of debris on the surface of the water,—when employment fails he will drift on. He has drifted so from Washington, to Baltimore, to Pittsburg, to Cincinnati, as his opportunity draws him. It is a poor opportunity. His work is disagreeable, and his pay is small; and while he works he will have to put up with all manner of abuse. If he resents his ill treatment, he will lose his job. In slavery times, he would be flogged,—now he will be discharged; either way he is a slave. He cannot rise. Whatever he earns goes to pay for the vices that are his only comfort in life.

“His job just now, as we get to know him, is in some factory where there are big steam vats. I don’t know that I have a right conception of these, but they seem to me like boilers, closed all round when in use, but quite hollow,—that is to say, with none of the flue-work which you see in a boiler. It is Phipps’s business to go down into the vats and shovel out the refuse which accumulates there. This work is done when the vats are only partly cool, because time is money,—the concern can’t afford to wait for them to cool entirely. Besides it isn’t necessary to wait, because there is degraded help to be hired who will endure almost anything for the sake of employment.

The concern will naturally do no more for the convenience of its workmen than is absolutely necessary, and very little is necessary where the workmen are negroes. The steam will be shut off for a little while and then Phipps must go down with his shovel. The vats, as I understand, are in a battery, so to speak, side by side, and there are pipes connecting them, furnished with valves by means of which any vat may be cut out and emptied of its steam, with the others still in use. We know from what happened that some such arrangement there must have been.

“There is a vat to be cleaned, and Phipps and another man are sent in. This other man is one Henry French, and he is white,—on consideration of his color Phipps has no very strong reason for thinking highly of him. Yet no doubt they two are chums of a sort, comrades in misery, the white man virtually a negro since he stoops to work with a negro at a negro's work. They have little thought of sentiment, anyway,—their work is ready for them and they go at it. The air is stifling hot down in the vat. The men are allowed to come up and breathe now and then. A ladder is let down through the manhole, and from time to time, taking turns, they thrust out their heads for a mouthful of fresh air. Nor do they suffer as you or I would,—that is to be borne in mind. An angle-worm may be cut in two and never be the worse, and a negro may be sent into a bath of steam which would cause you or me to faint, and manage somehow.

“Then comes the tragedy.

“All of a sudden, as these men knock and scrape and shovel, half-blinded, half-suffocated, there smites their ears the hiss and sputter of rushing steam. What does it signify? They know only too well.

They have thought of the great danger which threatens them, and they are instinctively on the alert to catch the first warnings of its approach. The amount of it is that the valve between their vat and the steam supply has opened. By accident? By inadvertence? More likely the latter, but what of that? We blame, perhaps, the unthinking, careless hand which has done this awful thing, but after all, who are we to measure every species of human action by our narrow standards of good and evil? How much of what we call evil is good half seen through? Judas Iscariot betrayed his Master, and him we execrate, finding no words bad enough to voice our abhorrence of his deed. But I ask you what would be the drama of Calvary had Judas not done that very thing, had he shrunk from his part for fear of the censure of his fellow men? Call his act what you will, the crime of crimes indeed, and still it had to be committed in order that a greater good might come to pass. The hand which let the steam in on those two wretches made possible a sacrifice of transcendent merit, and by that I doubt not it was justified in the final accounting.

“Phipps and French, I repeat, know what the hissing means,—an instant more and they will be cooked alive. Consider, in so far as you may, what it is to be cooked alive. It is quite the most horrible death a man may die. Death at the cannon’s mouth, death by sickness the most loathely, any manner of death whatsoever, though no manner of death is grateful, were easier to face than the death which threatens Phipps and French. They have thought of that, talked of it, very likely. All in a flash they think of it again, and there is a mighty fear in their hearts. The instinct of self-preservation, the great first principle of nature,

will not be long asserting itself. Simultaneously, and in the very moment when the hiss and sputter strike their ears, they spring to the ladder.

"It is only a few feet. Phipps may have been a little quicker, or a little nearer. Anyway, he reaches it first.

"His foot is already on the rung.

"Then he stops and draws back.

"'You go up first, Hank,' he says. 'You've got a family and I haven't.'

"And Hank, scrambling up first, escapes with only a few trifling burns, whereas Phipps, though he follows immediately after, comes out scalded from head to foot, his flesh dropping from his bones, to linger for some hours in the intensest agony, as if to prove how horrible it is to be cooked alive,—and then die."

CHAPTER IV

THE POINT OF IT

HERE Mr. Jakes paused, and silence reigned in the little church. People breathed, of course, but they were so quiet about it you could imagine they didn't.

Was there going to be more of the story of William Phipps? Evidently, for though Mr. Jakes had paused, he was looking down at his congregation in a way to suggest that he wasn't done,—you would guess at once from his manner that he was only waiting for the parable to sink in a little. And so it was; after a minute or so he quoted his text again—"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,"—and resumed his discourse:

"The news of what had happened spread quickly, as horrible news always will, and people employed about the establishment came running in scores and hundreds, until there was a crowd gathered to gaze upon the formless mass of flesh that had been Phipps, and to hear Henry French proclaim, with tongue made eloquent by gratitude, the sacrifice of the man who had chosen to die that his friend might live.

"These workmen were human beings, even as you and I are, and we can know, by looking into our own hearts, about what their emotions must have been.

First distinguished, among these emotions, was horror,—a great, absorbing horror, to see a man cooked alive. And next was pity, likewise great and absorbing. But were these all? These the men would equally have had were somebody to be cooked alive under any circumstances. Had they no emotion by reason of the peculiar circumstances here exhibited, particularly the circumstance of Phipps having voluntarily given up his life for another? Harkening to French's grateful testimony, had it no effect upon them all its own? Of a certainty it had, or they were not human.

“And what was that other emotion?”

“My friends, I refer you to your own hearts for my proof when I say it was love,—no other. It was the shadow and counterpart of that love, than which no love is greater, shown by Phipps in his transcendent sacrifice. By that tragedy enacted before their faces there had come to them an access of good will,—we know it because we know that were we in their places there must have come to us an access of good will. Not a man but was softened, not a man but was made better disposed toward all the world, not a man but was in that moment less selfish. What man, provided he be human like you and me, but must find it easier, with the spell of that tragedy upon him, to do unto others as he would be done by? Of course the spell could not last forever,—emotions are too volatile for that. In a few days at most, very likely in a few hours, it would have passed, leaving these men as they were before; but so long as it lasted it made for that best morality which Jesus defined in the parable of the Good Samaritan. So long as it lasted it helped to get God's will done on earth as it is in heaven.

“The effect is universal,—no matter who the man is, so long as he has the common human nature, he does not escape.

“Take the foreman, for instance. He is a hard, cold man, as he has to be,—his superiors are exacting with him and he has to be exacting with those he is superior to. Naturally he is not pleased to see the men dropping their work and lingering about, and he hurries over to rebuke them. There is anger in his heart, and he is disposed to be severe and harsh. But now he discovers what has happened,—most of all he hears French’s testimony; and can you imagine him holding his wrath? No, he may still insist on the men going back to their work, but it will be in a gentler way than he had intended. He will not storm and scold, to void the anger in him, for now the anger will be no longer there. There will be no miracle wrought, but it will be apparent that the cold, hard foreman is likewise softened,—even to him there has come such an access of good will as shall bear visible fruit.

“Then there is the doctor. You know doctors,—it is part of their trade not to be unduly affected by horrid sights. We depend on them to be calm, no matter what agony they are called on to witness. They are used to horrid sights, they are schooled in the spectacle of blood and raw flesh; and so it is easier for them to be calm. This doctor is not especially shocked. If he feels the horror and the pity at all, they will be relatively weak in him. But how about that other emotion? Doubt not he feels that, however schooled he may be in the denial of his feelings. When he hears French’s testimony, he sees the dying Phipps in a new light. The doctor is more sensitive than the others, at bottom, more delicately nurtured, and the

impression will be stronger upon him, the spell of the tragedy will abide with him longer. Him you will find telling others about it, and delighting to tell, dwelling on the sublimity of it,—he will tell his family, his students, other patients, who come to him with their woes. And in his bearing toward people you will find him different, you will find him better disposed. To him also has come the access of good will to bear visible fruit.

“And the newspaper reporters. They are the evangelists. Reporters have much to make them callous, with all the meanness and sordidness they encounter. But their part is to nose out all the details, and very soon they come upon that which is unusual in the case of Phipps. And flighty, cynical fellows though they are, they are still human, and they are affected as have been the others. They have experienced the access of good will,—they are filled with it as they write, though they shall call it by no name or consciously identify it. It is there nevertheless, and it flows out through their fingers and pencils, into the words and sentences which they put down, and these latter carry out the spell in the printed page and cause it to lie upon the thousands who read. Imagine yourself opening your newspaper and reading the deftly written story of William Phipps, and tell me whether or no there would come to you, in consequence, a better disposition, a greater readiness to do as you would be done by.

“He died, and was buried, and his funeral was a triumph. They hid his coffin in flowers and they followed him to his grave as if he had been one of the world's great. They freely confessed their debt to him. They raised a shaft of stone and wrote on

it the story of what he did, how that he had exemplified the love than which there is none greater. It is a story worthy to stand, because whosoever shall pause to read it, though he shall live a thousand years hence, must go his way a better man.

“Nor are these all,—many more, so intimately are men in touch with one another, have been blessed by the ministry of Phipps. In these may I not include you, my friends, who listen now to my poor account? Are you not in this instant conscious of an access of good will? Thinking of Phipps are you not made better disposed? I believe I know that you are.

“I call it the ministry of Phipps,—and that is the point I am getting at. What I mean is no less than that in his last sublime moments of life, that lowly negro was a minister of Jesus the Christ, in the way of the New Testament. Call it love, or good will, or God’s will, that sentiment which he caused to flow into so many hearts was the very sentiment, both in manner and matter, which Jesus died to bring into the world. St. John calls it grace; Moses brought the law, says St. John, but grace, the grace to give the law effect, came by Jesus. A minister is a servant, and as an ordinary servant brings you meat Phipps brings you the saving grace, only with the difference that whereas you may decline the meat, grace, brought in that way, you may not decline,—it possesses you without asking your leave. Grace, love, good will, God’s will, these are but different names for the same thing, and it is the very thing which all religions, from the beginning, have tried to put in the hearts of men, in order to their betterment. The Christian way of bringing this about, the way taught by Jesus, is the way Phipps pursued. Nobody, least of all himself,

thought of the negro's sacrifice as a renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary, but no matter. The effect was the same, notwithstanding. The effect waited on no confession of faith, no acknowledgment whatever.

"Ordained? No, Phipps was not ordained, in the common sense. He had never seen the inside of a seminary, perhaps. He knew no definitions in theology. No bishop had ever laid hands on him. As likely as not he had never once looked into the Bible, and he knew the name of Jesus only as a word to blaspheme with. He was a minister by his works, and we shall not quarrel with his orders. The supremely unselfish impulse which made him draw back and let his friend go up the ladder first, that was his sufficient ordination."

Once more Mr Jakes paused, and now you would guess that he had finished. But no,—he proceeded to a sort of summing up. It was in a different manner, however,—he was more conscious, and he stumbled considerably, especially over certain phrases.

"Such," he said, "is the dynamic of love. Emotional validity—I mean maxims of morality are devoid of emotional validity. They served well enough while yet men were children, because it is possible to make children obedient, by coaxing them, or scaring them, or otherwise. But men are no longer children and can't be ruled so. They already know as much about morality as you can teach them, but mere knowing doesn't make them moral. In order to make them moral, you must enliven your law with emotion,—give it emotional validity. Phipps might have gone to school and learned all there is in the books about right and wrong, and then gone forth and preached his learning with the tongues of men and of angels, and in the

end have done not a tithe as much to make men better as he did in that one brief moment of sublime sacrifice. Emotional validity—I mean the dynamic of love asks for no intellectual assent, no conscious belief, no faith. Whoever takes up his cross and follows Jesus becomes, by that, a dynamo of love, to generate love and drive it into the hearts of other men. He need not give up his life, as Phipps did, though it is by giving up his life that he sets the highest seal on his ministry. In the smaller, even in the smallest concerns of life he may still be devoted to sacrifice, still be a dynamo sending out love like a genial current to flow into the hearts of other men.”

The sermon ended so flatly and lamely, indeed, that Dr. Robert, could he have known, must have trembled, even though all else had gone so strangely well. For the doctor had set great store by the ending, expecting much of certain sounding expressions, concerning which, when his boy muttered that their meaning eluded him, he remarked that it was necessary to split the ears of the groundlings.

There was a hitch over the benediction. The congregation, having sung the last hymn, remained standing, as the custom was, expectantly, with heads bowed; but Mr. Jakes had gone wool-gathering, to be recalled only after an interval, by the uneasy shuffling here and there. Luck was with him still, however,—people attributed his hesitancy once more to his deep feeling, and set it down to his credit. When the benediction was pronounced at last, people called it good.

Afton was won, and now that the services were over, pressed forward delightedly to shake hands and get acquainted. Squire Thornhill took his place by the pulpit and did the honors, making the introductions

with a flourish of pompous wit. Mr. Jakes was taken wholly by surprise,—even the searching foresight of Dr. Robert had reckoned on no such ordeal,—and made very ill at ease; he knew not in the least how to carry his part, and dared venture scarcely a word in answer to the greetings that came pouring over him like a flood. A very flood it was,—no other tongue but his was tied. Mr. Jakes heard himself praised and congratulated on every hand, and his sermon declared to be fine, splendid, beautiful, lovely, sound, helpful and what not.

The squire was as enthusiastic as anybody.

"Jakes," quoth he, "you must come up to my house to tea Wednesday evening. You've suggested some pretty keen thoughts, and I want to talk with you about them. I want you to meet my family more intimately. It'll do them and me good, and maybe it won't do you any harm."

Compliments, especially where they fall in so copious a shower, will sometimes affect bashfulness favorably, and Mr. Jakes was feeling rather better until the invitation to tea burst on him and filled him with new alarm. What further unheard-of trial did it portend? He hadn't the faintest notion and he quickly imagined the worst. No, he would thrust himself into no such peril. He stammered out a declination, frankly confessing, in his desperation, that he had rather not. But Thornhill wouldn't listen.

"I know you're not a society man," he said, clapping his pastor on the back. "I like you all the better for that. We're not much for society, either. You'll find no formality, none at all. Come up and make yourself at home. No ice to break. You'll be glad you came."

And after all, that might prove true. Mr. Jakes bethought him how that he had undertaken to do, within reason, the things expected of him, and here was a thing clearly expected and not on its face unreasonable.

CHAPTER V

OMNIS AMANS

THE Thornhills, by all ordinary tokens, were the highest of Afton's high life. They had a furnace in their cellar and a piano in their front room. And they kept a hired girl the year round. These were distinctions. You would hear it more than broadly intimated that certain things were easily to be had where a body didn't take the trouble to pay for them, yet somehow the 'Thornhills' distinctions remained distinguished. There wasn't another furnace in the village and only two in the whole county. A few families had an organ, but none had a piano, while as for hired girls, they were markedly exceptional. Once more, and without opening your ears much, you might hear that any number of girls had left the squire's roof because they had to earn their wages a second time collecting them; yet nevertheless the household always boasted its hired girl, year in and year out.

The family were three in number,—the squire himself aggressive and abounding in speech; Mrs. Thornhill, slim and silent and not very much interested in anything; and Cecilia, who was their daughter and only child.

Cecilia was twelve years old, and enormously accom-

plished for her day and generation. Her performances on the piano were quite the wonder of that particular corner of the world. She could play Silvery Waves entire, even to that part which called for a sustained trill with the third and fourth fingers, while the thumb and remaining fingers were picking out the melody. Have you ever tried to trill, on the piano, with your third and fourth fingers? Do so, and you will begin to understand how accomplished Cecilia was. Even her illustrious namesake who brought the angel down from heaven, would not easily have played Silvery Waves all through without skipping.

Mr. Jakes thought this little girl very lovely indeed, the first glimpse he caught of her. His bashfulness, very much in evidence while the squire was presenting him to the cold and colorless lady of the house, eased much in the presence of the blooming child; his heart went out to her as it might to a sweet flower suddenly met with in a desert. But when she greeted him, with airs and affectations, and especially when she played Silvery Waves, somehow the bashfulness came back on him worse than ever. It was too much like finding the flower of the desert a paper imitation after all, correct in form but lacking in essence.

After a very bad quarter of an hour in the company of the whole family, the squire, with courtly unction, asked Mrs. Thornhill if she would excuse them, whereupon Mrs. Thornhill, not to be outdone, would, and Mr. Jakes was led away, by his host, to the library. That was another distinction, only a degree less distinguished than the furnace, the piano, and the perennial hired girl. There was nothing like it in Afton. Most houses had no books in them but the children's readers and arithmetics and geographies.

There were possibly as many as four copies of Webster's Unabridged, and Daniel the pensioner owned a set of Appleton's Cyclopaedia, which he never in the world looked into, but which he was proud to speak of as containing, like the Koran, all wisdom. What was the use, protested Daniel, of a-clutterin' and a-lumberin' up your house with four or five hundred books, when you could have all the good of them in twenty-five or thirty? But the squire chose to clutter and lumber his house notwithstanding. His library, not a small room, was lined with books. Nor did they remain unread. Their owner spent most of his spare time with them. He was really a bookish man.

"Light reading for a scholar and theologian," he said, in mock deprecation, as he set out the easy-chair. "I don't get to the bottom of things, as you learned men do. I haven't the time, to say nothing of ability. Here are the German transcendentalists."

He swept his hand over a shelf. Mr. Jakes, having taken a seat, stared dumbly at the backs of the books.

"They are *personæ non gratae* to the cloth, I dare-say?" the squire went on, with a jocular nod.

He was looking at Mr. Jakes and Mr. Jakes, no escape offering, nodded back.

"I got interested in them through Emerson," Thornhill affably explained, spreading the while. "I wanted to see what transcendentalism was like at its source. But do you know, I never have been able to get beyond Kant, or far with him, for that matter? It seems to me like plunging into a deep sea, along with an expert diver. Kant takes me down till I almost lose myself, and come up dazed, with a ringing in my ears. Fichte takes me still deeper, and I bring back hardly any definite sensation except of discomfort

and a feeling that I'm pretty small potatoes. And Hegel,—well, old Hegel takes me down so deep that I rise to the surface bleeding at the nose, so to speak, and I don't know whether I'm afoot or on horseback."

The squire burst into a loud laugh, and Mr. Jakes smiled a faint, scared smile. Why shouldn't he be scared? What if he should be cornered into venturing some sort of a rejoinder? But he wasn't,—in a moment his host was off again; he was wound up and eager to display himself.

"By the way, Jakes," he said, "what is your notion of the categorical imperative?"

The new minister had not come there to seem what he wasn't,—he was willing to confess that he had never heard of the categorical imperative; but before he could form the words, the squire was once more cantering ahead.

"That's a delicate question, I suppose," he said. "When a philosopher like Kant goes out of his way to be kind to religion, it doesn't become a clergyman to be harsh with him. But a mere layman like myself need have no such scruples, and I say plainly, without equivocation, that I regard the categorical imperative as a cowardly evasion."

He brought this out denunciatorily. To add still further emphasis, he tilted his heels a couple of inches or so off the floor and came down on them in a crunching manner.

"Emerson, Mr. Jakes," he declared, glowering solemnly, "would have been no such coward. Where-soever the light led, he followed. In that, at least, he was greater than his master, if Kant was indeed in any real sense his master."

For a moment neither spoke, Thornhill looking aggressively down and Mr. Jakes weakly up. Once more the new minister was on the point of protesting that he was being led beyond his knowledge, and once more he was prevented. The squire turned abruptly and swept his hand over another shelf with an eloquent gesture.

"Emerson!" he exclaimed, in tones which dripped with reverence. "The grandest mind, the bravest heart, the purest soul that God ever put in the human form! Perhaps I ought to say, with one exception. I will say, with one exception. I make that concession to the Christian tradition."

He took down one of the volumes and turned the leaves.

"Mr. Jakes," he said, "I'm going to pay you a very high compliment,—I don't well know how it could be a higher. Your phrase, 'dynamic of love', reminds me of Emerson. It is distinctly Emersonian, in my opinion,—the opinion, of course, of a simple, unlearned layman," and the squire swelled especially under this magnanimous burst of self-depreciation.

"Really," stammered Mr. Jakes, "I—that is——"

He was going to confess outright that the phrase wasn't his at all, that it meant little or nothing to him,—the whole truth, in short; but Thornhill wouldn't have it.

"I know, I know!" he said. "You're too modest to claim credit. I admire you for that. That's Emersonian, too. Some say Emerson was vain, but he wasn't. You and I, who know him by his books and not by mere personal traits, who, in other words, know him for what he really was,—nobody can tell us he was a vain man. He was superlatively a modest man, in the best sense of the term. Of course true modesty

doesn't tell a man to deny knowing what he knows he knows. That's false modesty."

"And yet, Mr. Thornhill——"

So far Mr. Jakes got with a purpose to disclaim ever having read a word of Emerson's, when he was headed off.

"Certainly not!" cried the squire, and thumped the table with his fist. "Certainly——"

But just here it fell his turn to be headed off. Mrs. Thornhill appeared in the doorway, like a thin sort of ghost, announcing in a voice of ghostly calm that tea was ready. Would they be pleased to step out?

"Come, Jakes," said the squire, descending from transcendental heights to the commonplace of hospitality, and led out, as he had led in, marshaling his guest to the dining-room. The table was square and rather large and they had each of them a long side so that they seemed far apart when they were down. Mr. Jakes sat opposite the lovely Cecilia, and found her scrutiny distinctly hard to bear. To be sure she was too accomplished in the elegancies of the polite world to stare at him directly, but she managed to keep an eye on him pretty constantly, and to make him very conscious. And particularly did the child's attention serve to make him conscious of his clothes,—perhaps for the first time in his life he thought of them with shame. He possessed but the one suit for all occasions, the suit which had astonished Afton on the day of the inaugural, a workingman's garb, and old at that. The squire wore linen, fresh from the laundry, and his coat was sleek and new, and Mr. Jakes felt the difference, with Cecilia's eye upon him.

He was requested to ask the blessing and though the expression was unfamiliar, he rightly guessed what it

meant, and was not too embarrassed to bethink him to render his little prayer in English, though Father Peter's Latin grace leaped to his tongue. But just at the end, quite involuntarily, and without knowing what he did until it was done, he made the sign of the cross. Nor did the slip pass unheeded. Cecilia, raising her downcast glance a little sooner than the others, caught the strange gesture, and after that her scrutiny was harder to bear than ever.

The squire was nowhere near done airing himself. He talked and talked, occupying all the time. He spoke most of Emerson, bringing him in at every pretext,—making pretexts, indeed; but others received his attention. He was loaded and primed to make an impression on his guest, and he wandered far, from the Donation of Constantine and the False Decretals of Isidore, down to the Oxford movement and the new revision. Hardly any field was overlooked, in fact. He discussed literature in the manner of an adept. He liked Thackeray better than Dickens, but considered Dickens, in spots, the greatest creative genius in the language. Shakespeare he deemed much overrated. George Eliot was pretty good, for a woman, and Mrs. Humphry Ward even better. However, he did not wish to be understood as raving over Robert Elsmere. Not by any means. Elsmere was, in fact, a poor character, poorly worked out.

Wouldn't Mr. Jakes have more tea?

No more,—and these were about the only words the minister was called on to utter. The Squire flowed copiously, joyfully carrying the whole weight of the conversation; and that was fortunate,—they would have got on but awkwardly, had any considerable part of that weight fallen on Mr. Jakes. For now his

tongue was doubly tied. There was Cecilia furtively eyeing him, but that was no longer the worst. Indeed, Cecilia was quite forgotten,—another person had entered his life, within those few minutes, and blotted out the sense of about all else. In the wink of an eye, so to say, a new thread had been shot through the web of his destiny, in much the most important thread yet.

The blessing acceptably asked, Mrs. Thornhill tinkled a little bell and the hired girl came in with the tea. Mr. Jakes sat with his back toward the kitchen, and by that she came in behind him, so he did not see her until she passed round the table and was setting her burden down by her mistress' elbow. He caught a glimpse of the moving figure, and looked up,—the girl, with all the candor of her species, was staring at him; and their eyes met. It was all over in an instant. Mr. Jakes looked down straightway, but in the interval he was become a changed man, inhabiting a different country, with its new heaven and its new earth. He was dazed and bewildered, knowing not what had happened to him, only that it was something momentous. He had come there a complete stranger, except as hearsay might inform him, to the mightiest of human passions. No doubt Cecilia had more understanding of such matters than he, the better discernment to identify those ineffable sensations which had come over him. About all he could make of them was an astonishing confusion, the most confounded in all his experience, bitter and sweet all at once, in the midst of which he seemed to be tossed about like a bit of cork in a whirlpool.

The girl's name was Christine, though her name didn't matter in the least,—he knew it not, nor had a thought about it; she was sufficiently identified unto

him, for all eternity, by the look she had given him. She was a great full-bosomed Swede, with flaxen hair and pink cheeks, very handsome, in a large, animal way,—but neither did these potent charms much matter. Later, perhaps, when he should have brooded over his passion, these peculiarly feminine attributes might get to mean something to Mr. Jakes; for the present it was only the eyes as they shed their radiance over him, as they darted into the very center of his soul he knew not what message, save that it thrilled him, and stunned him, and made him a cork in a whirlpool,—not the bodily eyes (Mr. Jakes couldn't have told you what color they were) but eyes become the mighty means whereby deep speaketh unto deep.

He bolted his toast, and it might have been sole-leather, for aught he knew to the contrary. He gulped down his tea and tasted nothing. The squire's voice, grown more and more boisterous with his rising delight in himself, was as the roar of a distant cataract, or the brawl of a noisy brook, meaningless. Thornhill was all the time appealing to his guest in support of his views, but always without waiting for a reply. He was gladly ready to construe silence into assent. In no way could Mr. Jakes have responded more satisfactorily than by keeping still, and his absent manner, what should it seem but a scholarly thoughtfulness? If the young man was more or less dumfounded, what was that to wonder at, with all the wisdom of the ages on parade before him?

When they were done with tea Mrs. Thornhill once more suffered herself to be prevailed on, by her husband's courtly persuasions, to excuse them, and they filed back into the library,—the squire quite at the exuberant flood-tide of his discoursing, Mr. Jakes

knowing not in the least whether he walked on solid floor or in the clouds. And still his manner was satisfying. He lay back in the easy-chair, outwardly calm for all his inward confusion, and gazed up at the squire and the books, and wore the air of being properly overwhelmed by these, though he saw absolutely nothing, anywhere, but a pair of viking eyes, darting messages.

He stayed till after midnight. He would have stayed all night, so thoroughly did his spell rob him of the power of initiative, had not the squire, who had long since warmed to the point of calling him his dear fellow, reluctantly brought the sitting to an end.

"My dear fellow," he said, "this is what I enjoy. I could go on this way till morning. But life isn't made up wholly of its joys. We have the morrow and its duties to think of. So we'll say good-night, for this time."

They parted at the front door, the squire lighting his guest out, and gripping him cordially by the hand by way of final compliment.

"Come up any time!" he said. "Use my library just as if it were your own. It's the library of an unlearned layman, but you may find something in it worth your while."

A singular illusion overtook Mr. Jakes. Of course it was the squire's eyes that beamed on him in the light of the hand-lamp held high; but they darted Christine's message all over again. And whose hand was it pressing his, if not Christine's? He trembled violently. He was like one who holds the handles of a battery,—he could not let go though the shock shook him from head to foot; Thornhill had to disengage himself at last, by gentle force. It was all very pleasant for

Thornhill, who had likewise his illusion. Was it not all testimony to the tremendous impression he had made on this young man? Cecilia and her mother had gone to bed, and it was better so. Cecilia, especially,—had Mr. Jakes held her hand in that clinging, electrified fashion, could the accomplished child have failed to draw unfortunate inferences?

CHAPTER VI

OMNIS AMANS AMENS

HE went home. Instinct was enough to direct his heedless footsteps thither,—conscious volition was wholly in suspension. Do you rightly consider Mr. Jakes's peculiar position? Your average man come to his age will have been in love a score of times already, but it was this man's first attack. Your average man, having learned by experience the awkwardness of the business, will be on his guard, his heart warily fortified against the shaft which may strike him any moment. But this man, not forewarned, foreseeing nothing, fearing least of all the thing he had most to fear, had come with his tender heart on his sleeve, and behold, it was pierced through and through.

He had no inclination to go to bed, late as was the hour,—he sat him down, in the dark, to meditate. He would force himself to meditate, to take thought of his situation, to look his new trial fairly in the face. No, that wasn't the needful thing, either,—what he needed was to put the thought of his situation away from him, to forget all about it, to force himself to meditate on other matters. Very well, then! Before he went up to the squire's he had been wondering what he should preach about next Sunday; that was a very

proper matter,—he would fix his meditations upon it.

What should he preach about next Sunday?

About two wide eyes, darting messages of tremendous import! Anyway his thoughts, start them as he would, command them as he would, came to nothing else.

He lighted his lamp, with a view to writing,—sometimes a man will more easily control his thoughts if he writes. But hereupon an extraordinary thing happened,—he raised his eyes, casually, to a print above his table which had hitherto been a portrait of Beethoven, and it was Christine. It brought him his first conscious impression of her face as a whole; as yet he had been sensible only of the eyes. Memory of its own motion put her heavy roll of flaxen hair in place of the master musician's shocky bristles; filled out his sunken cheeks plumply, and pinkly; made of his sad, sagging mouth a rosebud, on rather a large scale, for even infatuation could not picture Christine as a delicate creature,—she had a wholesome mouth, but not too small to take in, without inconvenience, the copious nourishment which her robust person required. Mr. Jakes beheld the lineaments of Christine taking form above him there, and he could not withdraw his eyes. He sat an hour thus, writing never a word, suffering dumbly.

After about an hour his lamp went out. It waned, little by little stealing his vision away. Just at the last it flared up suddenly, and was gone. The vision vanished in a burst of light. He sprang to his feet and rushed out into the night.

Where was he going? Useless to ask him, for he knew not. But the purpose which he had soon revealed itself,—in a few minutes he was back at the

squire's house, staring up at the windows, as he had stared up at the print, powerless to take his eyes off. They were all dark except one, but that one, was it not a star of hope? It was an upper window, at the corner of the house, and beyond it a light burned. How should he know, or so much as guess, that it was Cecilia's window, and that the light burned because, with all her accomplishments, she dared not go to sleep in the dark? No, the wish fathered the thought most grateful,—it was Christine's room. Christine herself was beyond that thin curtain. She was everywhere, anywhere, wherever he directed his gaze; but in an especial sense she was there, in that room.

He stood until the dawn straggled up out of the East to put out this vision as the waning lamp had put out the other. Before the dawn the inner light gave way, and the window was like all the rest, cold and gray and unresponsive to the yearnings of his heart. Then people began to stir, throughout the village, for Afton rose early. He heard a wagon clatter in the distance, and a fear of being seen seized him.

Is there in all the catalogue of afflictions the like of lovesickness?

Probably not. Anyway, it is very afflicting, if you have it at all bad. Its symptoms are various, and not more various than distressful. At times your heart will stand still. Again, you suffocate. Yet again, your head bursts into a number of fragments. It is a paralysis, but without the friendly numbness and indifference, for lovesickness renders you only the more acutely sensitive. You heartily wish you were dead, and you think seriously of pistol, poison, or hemp; but nothing comes of it, for the unkindest part of the ailment is a certain melancholy delectableness in the last

analysis, whereby life becomes doubly precious. There remains only the hope of starving to death, for you abhor food as nothing else. Mr. Jakes ate never a morsel during more than twenty-four hours after leaving the squire's table.

But for him there was more than lovesickness. Though that should be a greater agony to his emotional, trustful, unfortified bosom than ever it was to another, still it wasn't all, or even the worst. The worst was his conscience.

What was this stupendous wretched thing which had come upon him? 'Crouched among Squire Thornhill's shrubbery, watching the night out in dumb misery, he began to suspect; and by morning, as he crept away, fearful and ashamed, he more than suspected. He knew, indeed; not as well as a man of larger experience might, but well enough to be put in a torment of self-accusation.

The littleness of his experience, that worked mightily against him all through. What acquaintance had he with love in the last phase whereby it justifies itself according to the purpose of creation? None that was any good to him now,—his acquaintance went no further than the sordid perversion of love which is vice. Vice he knew only too well, having dwelt in the very midst of it. Only too well he knew what brought vicious men and women together down there in the slums. Because he had knowledge of no love but that, his conscience pricked him terribly,—love utterly selfish, utterly carnal. His accusing thought was that he was drawn to this woman as vicious men were drawn to women, and it made him out guilty of the basest possible treason against his mission. He had vowed always to crucify the carnal self, always to

exhibit in his own person the spectacle of self devoted to sacrifice; yet here he was helplessly in the clutch of a passion the most selfish, the most carnal.

Yes, helplessly,—no less. Once, in the night, there flashed out of the darkness of his despair a gleam of consolation.

“It is a trial, sent to strengthen me!” he exclaimed. “I shall rise above it, and be the fitter for my work!” He thought of Jesus tempted. “Behind me, Satan!” he said, and stood up, in body and in spirit.

But in that instant there was a movement of the curtain at the window he was watching. Perhaps it was the doing of some vagrant breeze, or even no more than the figment of his fancy,—none the less it brought him to his knees. His new-found courage fled ignominiously. His lofty resolution was forgotten. All through him, driving everything before it, surged the thought that Christine’s hand had moved the curtain, the hope that she was about to appear to him. She did not appear. The curtain hung motionless. But Mr. Jakes was helpless. When, after a little, he recalled the courage that had come to him, the resolution he had formed, he strove to renew them, it was in vain; he could not rise, he could only grovel on the ground.

He knew what it meant,—knew that unless a wonder should be wrought in his behalf, he was lost. That was the sum of it,—he might as well account himself lost already, for what wonder was to be expected in behalf of one found, on trial, so pitifully wanting?

The day came on, and Mr. Jakes cowered before its light. He shrank away from it, into his bedroom, the inmost apartment of his house. He cast himself down on his couch and lay there like a log, for hours. In time he became thirsty, before long his throat

burned with thirst,—yet he dared not stir out for water. There was stale water in the pail in the front room, and he would have been glad of that, but the front room had windows opening on the street, and he was afraid. He fancied eyes were waiting out there to look into his soul and discover how bad and abandoned he was. No, they needn't look into his soul,—it must of necessity stand proclaimed in his face what sort of a traitor he was, what sort of a vile impostor,—his only safety was in hiding his face. Though his thirst should consume him, it were easier endured than the shame of being found out.

Twice somebody knocked at the door and, on getting no response, went peering in at the windows. He could hear them tramping about the house, hear them discussing his whereabouts,—once it was children, and once it was womenfolks. He felt that they were peering in, and he trembled lest they somehow catch sight of him.

But that wasn't to last always,—there came upon him at length a different fear,—burst upon him, for it was immensely sudden in its beginning. All at once, out of nowhere, a terrific question was shouted at him: What if he should be prevented from getting Christine?

A different fear, distinctly. He no longer quaked and cowered,—in the passing of a second he was the elemental man perceiving his danger and springing up to ward it off. It was the danger of losing his woman, the woman his elemental manhood bade him get, not stopping to consider means, whether fair or foul. What were means to him, now? Springing up, Mr. Jakes saw himself, for a moment, in the little glass over the wash-basin,—saw the savage in him plainly re-

vealed, nay, worse than the savage, the very beast; and he exulted. Let the world beware! Let none venture to stand in his way! His conscience had cast off its leash, and he was free to do his elemental worst!

No, not quite that, either. His conscience wasn't altogether done with him, after all. He stepped out of the house and at the threshold met two little children, a boy and a girl. Something told him it was they who had knocked awhile ago, and then they told him so themselves,—or the girl did. She was the older and did the talking, comically puffed up with her importance. They had brought him a gift, and found him not at home; now they were come again.

"Mother baked pies to-day," lisped the girl, "and so she sent you one. It's mince, but if you'd rather have apple, Mr. Jakes, I'll take this back and bring you another."

No, his conscience wasn't done with him.

"Thank you, the mince will do very well," he said, and smiled so unsavagely that the children, looking up into his face, were moved to smile too, and fell into a confusion of bashfulness and scampered off.

Mr. Jakes went back into the house with the pie in his hand and was more troubled than ever. He bowed his head and wept. After considerable of that, he sat up and wrote some words on a paper:

"There may be some who will ask why I should kill myself. It is because I suffer so, and can see no end of suffering."

He laid the paper in a conspicuous place on the table and went out once more.

The evening was still and damp and close, and from the lush grasses mosquitoes swarmed up in millions to make high revel. Given weather like that, with

thick grasses to breed in, and mosquitoes are no joke. You are glad to shun them. You regret the business which takes you abroad,—unless it is urgent you stay at home, behind your screens. And so Mr. Jakes met nobody.

Or almost nobody. It wouldn't do to say nobody, because his wavering, uncertain course (it proceeded, on the whole, toward the squire's house, but deviated a good deal, and even doubled back on itself) hadn't taken him a great way until he met a woman hurrying along with a shawl over her head. The mosquitoes were amply enough to make anybody hurry who wasn't daft. The woman beat them off with one hand, and with the other drew the shawl closely about her face,—it were better to smother than be eaten up.

And this woman was Christine.

Queer stories are told of the Indian manner of wooing, how lacking in reserve it is, or was. Claim is made that in certain tribes the enamored brave was wont, in aboriginal days, to discover his passion by knocking the object of it on the head with a club. That may be only a yarn, yet there is reason to believe that the primal Indian, suddenly emerging from his shell of culture, is apt to go about this important business in a way all his own. Mr. Jakes had lain for hours under a torturesome vision, pictured out of a heated imagination, and here, all at once, the living reality of it had risen up before him. What was conscience or anything else to stay the storm of passion thereupon let loose? How was he likely to proceed, if not elementally, in the Indian fashion? They had come within two paces of each other when first he recognized her; on the instant, without ado, he sprang

at her, uttering some incoherent, animal cry, and caught her in his arms.

The fervid lover, especially in books, is greatly given to crushing his beloved in his arms. Mr. Jakes was fervid enough, and did his part, but Christine wasn't cut out for hers, either bodily or in spirit,—she was in both respects too burly. However, she was considerably jostled by the onset, so unexpected and so energetic,—a little more, indeed, and she must have been quite bowled over; for a moment she sprawled helplessly, while Mr. Jakes lifted and tugged at her frantically, as if he would bear her away. His strength was multiplied by madness, but it was unequal to his purpose, once she had gathered herself together. It was in no weakling grip he held her, but she rose up and shook him off, as some magnificent creature of the forest might shake off an attacking hound.

She left the greater portion of her waist in his hands,—the shawl had fallen off in the very beginning; she confronted him with her superb shoulders and bosom bare, and the sight drove him wilder than ever. He was lower than the Indian, once more,—a beast. Like a hungry beast he rushed upon her, with a fierce snarl as if in his desperate desire he would tear her in pieces.

But he tore her in no pieces further,—he did not so much as lay a finger on her. It was tolerably light yet, and when he was come near to her, so near that his hot face was all but touching hers, he caught her eye, and it made him quail. It was the very eye which had enchained him in the first instance,—that viking eye, so soft then, but now so hard, so like the steel of a sword. There lay in it a fearlessness, a calm confidence, a haughty defiance, but these were not the

worst; the worst was the look of supreme disdain, of unutterable detestation. Many waters, they say, cannot quench love, but a look of that sort is very dampening.

His mood changed as swiftly as a thought passes. He was minded no more to woo her by violence. Instead of that he would coax her, in the manner of the cultivated man.

He held out his arms to her. "Come!" he cried, in a melting tone.

She laughed in his face, witheringly, insultingly.

"I see myself!" she sneered, with cool irony.

Then she left him. Without a trace of embarrassment, much less of fear, she went back and picked up her shawl and wrapped it about her shoulders; and when she had done that, she proceeded on her way as if nothing had happened.

Lovesickness has been known to take its departure as suddenly and mysteriously as ever it comes on. Mr. Jakes stared blankly after Christine till her stalwart figure was quite lost to sight,—the mosquitoes settled thickly on his face and hands and drank their fill of his blood, but he heeded them not. The seven devils were passing out of his bosom, as the girl was passing out of his vision,—presently they were gone, and he was cured.

He went home. Night had set in, by now, and he struck a light, to discover that he still held in his hand the remnant of Christine's waists. He laughed and thrust it into the stove,—it was cotton, and light and dry, and made excellent kindling a little later. He prepared himself a cup of tea and drank it. He brought out a stout loaf of bread, and ate fully half of it, greedily, though it was dry. Then his eye discovered the

mince pie which the children had brought and he fell upon it and devoured it every crumb.

A man is always hungry after a violent fever.

Very refreshing, to be filled in that way. If anybody knows peace, he is the man who fills his belly after twenty-four hours of fasting. Moreover there was for Mr. Jakes the relief of having a great weight lifted off him. He drew deep breaths and considered how glorious it was to be free.

Not for long, though,—there was plenty of trouble still, when he came, as inevitably he must, to think what he had done, and what the upshot of it might be. That was the rub,—what the upshot might be. Would Christine inform against him? Had there been witnesses,—were there others to inform against him? Such questions were not long in getting themselves asked, and how should they fail to make him very uncomfortable indeed?

Mr. Jakes was not too innocent to understand that he had done a deed which the laws of men denounced an infamous crime. In his experience he had known a poor fellow sent to prison for life for doing no more, and only by going to prison escaping death at the hands of a furious mob. What kind of an outlook did this leave? Bad enough. More and more distinctly could Mr. Jakes see himself in the place of the wretch who, for no worse a deed, had barely got off with his life by going to spend it all in ignominious captivity.

His message to the world lay on the table where he had left it. He did not notice it at once,—when he did he crumpled up the paper and threw it in the stove. He might kill himself, even yet, but he would leave no mushy message behind.

He discussed the probabilities, trying to look the situation fairly in the face.

Probably Christine would inform against him. Probably she had already done so. Probably she had, or would, tell the squire. The squire was a magistrate and due process would issue forthwith, if it hadn't already issued. In a short time the Reverend Mr. Jakes would be behind the bars, or hanging dead by his neck from some tree. He tried to deny the probability of these things,—he could not. With the memory of that look in Christine's eyes, it was impossible to expect a better outcome,—Christine would do her worst.

He thought of flight. That was the first expedient he considered,—the most natural and obvious. But whither? Back to Dr. Robert? No, no!—he hadn't the heart to meet that good, true man, with his sense of guilt upon him. Not there,—rather to the forest, his mother, who never reproached him. Memories of the forest came sweetly to him. He thought of the free wilds and declared, in his trouble, that the haunts of men had nothing so worthy to offer him. So he made up his mind. And there wasn't a moment to lose. Most likely the minions of the law were even now coming after him,—they must find their bird flown.

He snatched up his hat and darted out.

The highways were empty and the houses dark,—if people were not asleep they were at all events very tranquil, and that was comfortably significant. Evidently they knew not what had happened, or if they knew, were not disposed to violent measures. Mr. Jakes found the silence most reassuring, and he was further reassured when he reached the squire's house, for it was dark too, from cellar to garret. He could

hear Cecilia warbling at the piano, and the sound fell upon his ear agreeably, not for its own sake but for what it indicated. No turmoil there, no hurried writing up of papers, no setting forth of officers in grim haste.

The tranquillity all about him served to still his fears, and that done, there was another remembrance ready to thrust itself into his mind, a remembrance likewise out of his life in the wicked city. Likewise it had to do with a fellow whom a woman accused, but he stoutly defended himself, denied everything, and finally made the woman out a great liar. In that connection Mr. Jakes had heard it laid down as a rule of the law that no man should be adjudged guilty of a crime of that character on the testimony of the woman alone. Was it not a comforting thing to recall? Why should he run away, then? He had only to deny everything,—it would be his word against Christine's, and the benefit of the doubt was his.

He halted and faced about and went back to his house.

He was willing to lie, have no doubt on that head. He was willing to lie, and bethought himself, deliberately and knowing full well what he was about,—bethought himself what manner of lie he should tell, and was exceedingly glad to find that a very simple, easily managed lie would answer. He had only to deny everything, only to set his word squarely against Christine's,—there were no devious windings to get lost in.

CHAPTER VII

ANOTHER VIKING

POLICE as well as other men, stand ready to testify that the way of a woman is curious. Fallen under the greatest wrong that can be done her, she will often, perhaps oftenest, choose to conceal her injury and say nothing about it to anyone. Of course it is her misfortune and not at all her fault, and misfortune is nothing to be ashamed of; still she will be ashamed. She will burn with resentment, yet suffer in silence, lest that which she deems a worse thing befall her, and this worse thing is publicity. And that is why, where she tells anybody, it is last of all the law. The processes of the law are cruelly public, and for that alone, to say nothing of other reasons, will she shun them. If she seeks redress, it is by channels apart from the law,—by unlawful channels even. Christine never breathed a word to the squire, or to any soul in Afton; but the very next day she went home to her brother, Thor Torrelson, a farmer about six miles out, and told him.

Mr. Jakes, meanwhile, was staying closely at home, hardly venturing into his field, much less the highways and market-place. But his timidity grew less when nothing happened, and when another Sabbath came, he mounted his pulpit and preached. The wil-

lingness to lie was in his heart and it gave him a front of brass, more and more as the sense of personal peril wore off,—people commented on the marked improvement in his manner, while as for the matter of his sermon, it left nothing to be desired. He looked out over his congregation and knew that nothing against him had come to their ears, and out of his thankfulness he was rarely gracious. He smiled and shook hands and chatted like a different man, and sent his flock home much pleased with him. Moreover, he was pleased with himself,—possibly he wouldn't be called on to lie, after all. He was willing, if need be, still he would much rather not.

But though he should be safe with his own people, there was the larger public for Mr. Jakes to fret himself about. The godless majority, the publicans and sinners of Afton, how stood it with them? Somehow, as often as he thought of the publicans and sinners, and that was oftener and oftener, he couldn't help but imagine dire things. He knew there must be a letter from Dr. Robert waiting for him in the post-office, and, though he framed other excuses for himself, the truth was he dared not go after it. He shrank from encountering those cynical, offish, unsympathetic men who were not only ready but eager to think ill of any minister,—a cardinal article of whose faith was a distrust of all religious profession. To be sure, if the congregation had heard nothing, there was small chance of the public at large having heard aught, but for all that he feared the publicans and sinners, as if they, with their skeptical, eyes, might see through him and discover the spot on his soul. He let the letter lie all the week. Sunday brought its access of new assurance and he resolved to go over on Monday.

When Monday came he wavered and put it off till Tuesday. On Tuesday he wasn't ready, either, and put it off once more, till Wednesday. Wednesday he went.

He calculated his hour to a nicety. There was one mail a day, due to arrive at 10 o'clock in the morning,—that, of course, was the hour of hours least desirable for his purpose. But as this was the busiest, so, by the law of reaction, the hours immediately following were the dullest,—between 11 and 12 o'clock the vicinity of the post-office was usually deserted. Mr. Jakes waited till half past 11 before setting out, yet when he turned into the main street he beheld a great crowd waiting.

What did it portend?

He was quick to suspect the worst. That the mail might be late, that Tronson the carrier, though not often found waiting, was subject to mishap,—these the most natural reflections to a calm mind were not for Mr. Jakes. The lingering crowd alarmed him profoundly,—he construed it to bode mischief. Why were they waiting, unless—

Great God, perhaps they were going to hang him there and then!

He came on, however,—whatever his fate the power was not in him to evade it by flight; and the way people looked at him wasn't calculated to lessen his concern. He would take his oath they had never looked at him so before,—a sneering distrust he had seen in their faces, even a certain hostility, but now there was more. Besides, why should his arrival be productive of so undeniable a stir? He distinctly heard several voices cry out, excitedly: "There he comes!"

He advanced boldly,—possibly it was an Indian instinct which kept him from showing the white feather no matter how badly scared he was; and got as far as the door of the post-office. People still wore that unwonted look, but they fell back to let him pass, and none spoke to him until just as he was entering. There a blockily built man, with a thick blond beard, stood suddenly forth in a threatening manner,—there was an angry light in his blue eyes, and an ominous knitting of his bushy brows.

“Your name is Jakes?” he said, with a strong Scandinavian accent.

Yes, it was Jakes,—no disputing that. The crowd pressed up,—they were publicans and sinners, almost entirely.

“My name is Torrelson,” the man went on. “I’m brother to Christine Torrelson. You know what this is for,” and he snatched a horsewhip from under his coat and fetched it across Mr. Jakes’s face.

Here was easily the most extraordinary incident that had ever taken place in Afton. People held their breath. For once the Fates had favored their corner of the pool with a stone whose proportions were already respectable, and not unlikely to become positively vast. For of course the end was not yet. What would Jakes do about it?—that was the question more or less definitely present in every mind.

What Jakes would do he did quickly,—almost too quickly for the spectacular effect. About the next the gaping, breathless crowd knew, Thor Torrelson lay on his back in the sand of the street, unconscious, with blood oozing from his nose and mouth.

Jakes had felled him like an ox, that was what Jakes had done. Some would have it, discussing the affair

afterwards, that the blow landed on Thor's nose, while others were confident that the point of his jaw caught the impact; but that was only a minor detail, anyway. As to the main fact there could be no quibbling,—it went into history clean-cut and untouched of doubt. The sturdy Thor Torrelson, sinewy and seasoned, had gone down before Jakes's fist, and was helpless to rise.

Afton was stunned. Men seemed to themselves to be dreaming. They were awakened by a voice calling down loudly from over their heads. It was Squire Thornhill's voice. He had his office up there.

"Bully for you, Jakes!" he shouted enthusiastically. "I saw the whole thing. You served him just right. He made a cowardly attack on you. I hope you've knocked his head off!"

Then the squire came racing down the stairs and rushed up and clapped his pastor on the back in an exceedingly gratulatory manner,—and that couldn't help but affect public sentiment. Thornhill might not be the best liked personage in the village, but all the same he stood as the embodiment of law, in virtue of his magisterial office; and when he gave in his approbation, so unequivocally, on such occasion, it was apt to be decisive. When the squire clapped Mr. Jakes on the back in token of his gratification, publicans and sinners followed suit, figuratively. A fighting parson? After all, nothing appeals to the heart of the ungodly more powerfully than a fighting parson,—the ungodly enjoy seeing the old Adam rising superior to the feeble restraints of clerical consecration, to discredit them. Then, too, who isn't fond of any sort of a good fighter, be he parson or not? They carried Torrelson inside, and noted how long it took him to

come out of his trance, and their esteem for Mr. Jakes rose fast and high. Sundry bucks, of sporting tendencies, talked of getting the new minister to give them lessons in boxing.

And the new minister himself, meanwhile?

Nobody in all that throng was more astonished than he. He stared vacantly at the prostrate figure,—if he were actually wondering how the man happened to be lying there, Mr. Jakes wouldn't stare much differently. And at the touch of the squire's hand he jumped, as he had oftentimes jumped at the touch of some lumberjack, though not with great violence,—his face was only slightly contorted, and instead of yelling he gave a sort of moan. But in the next moment he faced about abruptly, wavered just perceptibly, and then made off at a fast walk which was almost a dog-trot. All eyes followed him, of course. They saw him reach the corner where, if he was going home, he should turn, and, instead of turning, keep on, straight ahead. A little further and they lost him, but not for good. A mile and a half out the road was visible as it mounted over a hill. All eyes watched the hill and saw Mr. Jakes emerge,—he was running.

There were no services in the Unitarian church the following Sunday. Officially it was given out that Mr. Jakes had been called away by important business, but of course you might believe that or not, as you chose. The Unitarians, while asserting themselves guardedly and with manifest reservations, clearly wished it to be understood that Mr. Jakes had come back, after a short run, taken wholly for the sake of the exercise (who didn't know that he went in very largely for exercise?), but later in the day had been

called away. That, too, you might or might not believe. Afton at large was not without its considerable doubts,—Mr. Jakes hadn't acted just like a man whose chief thought was of exercise. If he hadn't acted like a man out of his wits, then Afton at large would eat its hat.

But there was a more momentous question,—was he coming back? Certainly he was, the Unitarians made answer; just as soon as his business was attended to, he would return and resume regular services. His absence might extend over a few weeks, perhaps, but more likely only a few days. And Afton at large hoped the Unitarians might be right,—everybody, for one reason or another, wanted Mr. Jakes back.

He came. It was the succeeding Tuesday, toward evening, when Afton beheld his face once more. A stranger brought him, driving a team of bronchos, which he lodged at the livery-stable for the night; and the word went out that he was the French doctor from Bear Creek. He spent his time with Mr. Jakes, and at intervals, until a late hour, they two could be heard singing together. The singing wasn't half bad, and some of the neighbors sat up awhile to listen to it.

Early next morning the stranger drove away, alone.

CHAPTER VIII

UNTO THE GENTILES FOOLISHNESS

SUCH untoward incidents right at the start were not helpful to Mr. Jakes's mission. Scandal is never busier or swifter than in a little village, even though, in order to find anything to speak of, it has to make much ado about nothing; and his affairs were considerably better than nothing. Afton speedily guessed out a complete history of the Torrelson encounter,—a number of complete histories, in fact, for wasn't one man's guess as good as another's? People were free to believe what they liked, and they made the fullest use of their freedom. Absurd, contradictory, all else to make them incredible, the reports were,—but whatever they might be in other respects, they were always damaging. The mildest version, the version which the pastor's warmest adherents in his own society rested on,—even that admitted that Mr. Jakes had got himself into some sort of a woman-scape, and wasn't a woman-scape the most damaging thing in the world?

Yet living the scandal down wasn't wholly uphill work,—after all there were favoring declivities, so to say. It was a poor sort of a help, perhaps, but a help nevertheless, that the very persons who exulted most

in his downfall from grace, who conceived the worst stories about him, were at the same time the persons who could least help respecting the manner in which he had vindicated his manhood. Mr. Jakes took no credit for that, would have gladly confessed to anybody that it was the merest accident,—yet credit he got for it, notwithstanding, and it made the living down of the scandal easier. In every rallying-place of the publicans and sinners the parson would be raked fore and aft with a hot fire of calumny, but sooner or later there would be voices raised to commend the fighting-man he had shown himself to be. That he had betrayed Torrelson's pretty sister, these men couldn't be got to doubt, but after all, what of it? Apart from the hypocrisy of a minister being the guilty party, this was no very serious crime,—some even thought it no crime at all; and crime or no crime, the lad who could put up his dukes in such a fashion wasn't to be despised utterly.

Squire Thornhill's attitude was not so very different, and it helped, too. "Are we a lot of Puritans?" the squire would ask, when other Unitarians made demur, and inasmuch as the name of Puritans was a hissing and a byword to this liberal sect, the question had a strongly silencing effect. Not that Thornhill admitted Mr. Jakes's guilt,—on the contrary, he had taken the trouble to go himself and ask the Torrelsons what the matter was, and having got nothing out of them that even remotely squinted toward an accusation, was convinced of Mr. Jakes's innocence of all intentional wrong; but even granting the other thing (so the squire put the case) why should they mind? Ministers weren't perfect any more than other men. Granting even that something quite deplorable had taken place,

it remained a fact that Mr. Jakes was doing a great work for pure religion, and might be expected, if suffered to develop, to do yet a greater.

It was true Mr. Jakes had made a hit. Everybody declared, though some might declare it grudgingly, that his sermons were a power. Persons who had not gone to church in years, some even who had never gone in all their lives, were going now, and going again, until they were regular attendants. It was no rare thing, any more, for the ushers to have to fetch chairs, to seat the people, and proposals for the enlargement of the church began to be put forward. The more thoughtful observed a change in the spiritual life of the community, and a change for the better,—Mr. Jakes had got people interested in better things. Naturally, since he was in the balance for weighing, none of his shortcomings were overlooked, and there was especially his lack of social graces. But in that connection the squire, constituting himself his pastor's advocate, had only to remind folks of the last incumbent but one; he had shone socially, his fund of small-talk was such that he could out-prattle any woman in town; yet he was a sorry ass in comparison with Mr. Jakes,—nobody could well deny that.

And so that particular cloud took itself off at length.

But there remained still the most serious obstacle he had to encounter, and that was the incurable dryness of the vineyard where he labored. Afton was a meager village, and its people villagers, with all the term implies. Their emotions were stingy,—they were not to be moved, as men in thick masses are, through their feelings; that was the worst, for his mission. Their close watchfulness of one another served to make them stiffly conscious and averse to giving them-

selves up to any display of sensibility; if sometimes he got them going in that direction, it was only to see them catch themselves and draw coldly back. He sowed copiously, in his own fashion,—that one lapse, it was dreadful, but it was all. For the rest he held steadfastly to the purpose he had avowed,—and the most he achieved was to get himself talked about. Endlessly talked about. Wherever two or three were gathered together, his name was sure to come up; people were always asking one another what strange thing he had been up to last.

And still his mission wasn't absolutely barren,—there was a harvest, of such fruit as he would have, though scanty. And rather curiously, too, this figurative reaping was the effect, in a sense, of a certain literal sowing. That is to say, it might never have come about only for his planting his two or three acres of poor land to melons.

Mr. Jakes choosing to plant melons was voted a particularly strange thing,—in its day it made talk and yet more talk. Men called him crazy. Melons on such land, light always and now moreover worn out with repeated croppings? Why, a five-year-old boy ought to know better. Melons, of course, had to have the richest ground, and even then the chances were so strongly against their maturing, in the average season, that no prudent man ever gave them much of his room or of his time. Anybody could tell him that and a number did,—Mr. Jakes wasn't left in the dark as to the egregious error he was falling into; but he wouldn't be set right. Was ever such obstinacy encountered by evangelists of good advice before? He could answer no argument, he could not so much as conceal the very real disquiet into which argument

threw him,—yet he persisted in his folly and planted every foot of his land to melons. The result? Well, the result was staggering, no less. Afton was pretty much inclined to doubt its senses, to question if it were not somehow the victim of an illusion, when those melons sprang up thriftily and flourished. There really was a suggestion of the uncanny about it,—about a crop prospering squarely in the face of an enlightened public sentiment. Afton in all confidence looked for sickly, yellow ineffectual vines to mock Mr. Jakes's labors and punish his pigheadedness, and there appeared instead a stout and virile growth which waxed and waxed until the little field lay under a canopy of broad leaves and made itself gay with yellow blossoms.

Byron, postmaster and merchant, doubtless shared in the general astonishment, but he was not too astonished to think of the practical bearings; melons were melons, whether grown by a miracle or what not,—that was substantially the reflection which suggested itself to Byron. He was sedulously attentive to his official duties, having rigid notions touching the responsibilities of a federal functionary, and it betrayed something uncommon in the wind when he left his wife and deputy to hand out the mail for a spell, one August day; and the purpose of his leaving was to drop up and call on Mr. Jakes. The minister was hoeing in his field, at the time, and that suited Byron very well,—it afforded him the opportunity to size up the melons without seeming to be too interested. That was the instinct of the trader, not to act too eager like.

“Mornin', elder!” he called out, cheerily, from quite a distance.

Mr. Jakes gave back the greeting in kind. He was always glad to see anybody.

"Melons lookin' fine," Byron observed, in an off-hand manner.

For that sentiment Mr. Jakes returned his thanks, taking it as a compliment.

Byron stooped down to handle a particularly striking specimen of the fruit. "Call 'em the gennywine Rocky Ford, eh?"

Mr. Jakes didn't call them anything but melons,—they might be the Rocky Ford for aught he knew.

"They look some like the pitcher of the Rocky Ford," said Byron, guardedly. "Figgered any on 'bout how you're a-goin' to git red of 'em, Mr. Jakes?"

Well, no, only in a very general way.

"Maybe you'd kinder like to have somebody take 'em off your hands, sort of?"

Decidedly. Mr. Jakes would like nothing better.

"Hum! 'Bout how much do ye think of gittin' out of 'em?" Byron was vastly guarded, just here, against displaying solicitude. But when Mr. Jakes made answer that he had hoped the melons might fetch enough to pay what he owed, the mask of the trader instantly fell.

"By gum!" Byron exclaimed, staring incredulously. "Scuse my strong language, elder," he added, in the note of sincere apology, "but you don't want much. I shan't take no advantage of ye, though. All I want's fair pay for my trouble, an' I'll see't you git whatever more there is in it. You let me have the melons, just as they lay in the field, an' I'll mark off whatever you owe me an' give ye credit for a hundred dollars. Most likely I can do better'n that by ye.

Course you understand it depends on how the market holds up. I figger your melons is a-goin' to be ripe all the way from ten days to two weeks ahead of anything in these parts, an' my notion is to git plenty of teams an' rush 'em right to the city while the iron's hot. I'll do what I say, anyway, and most likely some better. I won't take no advantage of ye. Is't a bargain, Mr. Jakes?"

It was a bargain.

Byron had no time to stop and visit, with his official duties calling him back,—he was already making off, with some commonplace remark to soften the abruptness of his going. But at the fence he faced about and shouted:

"Look out for the pesky boys!"

What boys? Mr. Jakes didn't understand.

"What boys?" Byron repeated, with a laugh. "Lord only knows what boys. Any boys. All boys. The boy don't live that won't steal melons. Look out for 'em, elder. They'll steal every last melon, if ye don't."

And Byron went his way.

A week later he came again and looked the melons over. "A leetle more sun won't hurt 'em," he said. On the following Saturday he notified Mr. Jakes that he would send the teams in on Monday.

But the harvest was destined for the day between, which was the Sabbath.

Mr. Jakes chose to preach briefly that morning, so briefly that he sent his congregation away a little after eleven o'clock. And going home, he chose to take a roundabout way. The effect was that he arrived full half an hour sooner than anybody acquainted with his

habits would be expecting him and entered the house by the front without going in sight of the field.

For his own information he had no need to go in sight of the field,—his ears sufficiently told him that the Goths were at his gates. He was quite prepared for the spectacle which met his eyes at once he passed through to the little porch in the rear,—the spectacle of a swarm of boys, big and little, some almost men and some in knickerbockers,—filling his field and destroying his melons.

He stood a moment watching them,—quite unobserved, so intent were they on their mischief. Then, very quietly, he stepped back and brought out a chair and a book, and sat down to read.

It was in that posture they discovered him. They were startled, as the word went round, and, for a little, frightened; not inconceivably they would be-think them of the mighty fist which had laid Thor Torrelson low,—anyway they took to their heels, the whole party of them, big boys ahead, little boys behind, cursing and screaming. But when they had got to the fence, and still Mr. Jakes sat reading, their panic left them, and they were fired afresh with wanton insolence. Nothing would do them now but they must go back and finish the havoc they had begun. Once more they overran the field, nor desisted till they had broken all the melons, and uprooted all the vines. Not a growing thing but a few weeds remained in the field, as they finally betook themselves off, whooping insultingly.

That was in a very few minutes, for the boys worked fast; but for two hours Mr. Jakes sat on his stoop, with the book in his hand. During so long a time he fought his passion, his anger flaming high within him,

never in his life higher. With all his heart he could have gone forth and slaughtered those boys, beat them and broken them as they had beat and broken his melons, strewn the ground with their mangled corpses as they had strewn his harvest,—in short, the savage in him swelled and fumed, until he was near bursting. But he put it down. The fight took about all his strength, though. When, at length, he laid aside his book, not a letter of which had he consciously seen, he was fainting weak, and in a bath of sweat.

The end was not yet, however.

It was well along in the evening, not far from nine o'clock, and Mr. Jakes was peacefully busied with some pastoral or domestic affair, his anger all gone, when there came footfalls just outside his door, and then after a moment, a timid knock. He opened, and his lamp disclosed a well-grown boy, fifteen or sixteen years old, who in a husky, faltering voice asked if he might come in. Of course he might, and welcome,—and he did, and in the better light it appeared that he had been crying. He was a big boy, and Mr. Jakes regarded him with concern,—it was no light matter when a boy who was almost a man would give way so.

Nor was he done crying. No sooner was he in than he walked to the table and laid down a handful of coins; and with that his tears flowed afresh.

"It's all I've got," he blubbered, "but I'm going to work to-morrow and earn more. I can get a job with a threshing-crew, and I'll work till I've paid you every cent."

This was all very singular. "You've made some mistake," said Mr. Jakes.

"Not now," the boy replied, gulping hard. "I've been making a mistake all my life, but not now."

"You mean this money for me?"

"Yes, sir."

"But you owe me nothing. What is it for?"

"For the melons. I was here to-day, and helped tear up your vines. I'm going to pay for them all."

CHAPTER IX

A BRAND FROM THE BURNING

MR. JAKES had two reasons for being glad,—a big one and a little one. The loss of his melons was to be made good,—that was the little one ; and it was so very little relatively, that he overlooked it altogether. What was the loss of all the melons in the world, in comparison with the winning of a soul? That was his big reason for being glad, the only reason he thought of,—a soul won, a heart made humble and contrite, for there was no doubting the boy's contrition.

As the testimony stood he was not a tremendously guilty fellow,—he had done no more than rob his neighbor's melon-patch, after the manner of his kind since time out of mind. He was a brand snatched from the burning, perhaps, but the burning was rather a mild and unthreatening affair, withal. Yet even on such a showing, Mr. Jakes was glad,—repentance was repentance and the one thing needful.

"Let's talk about it!" quoth he, and the boy was mightily willing, for the relief of his burdened conscience.

And so the whole story came out, for there was further testimony,—only the least of it had been told.

Willie Sanders (the boy's name) was the only child

of parents whose one great fault was that they loved him too ardently to love wisely. They put no restraint on him, and as if that weren't bad enough, they supplied him with money to spend as he liked without accounting. This money had been his especial undoing. Because of it dissolute boys much older than himself, and even dissolute men, cultivated his acquaintance, and their condescension so turned his young head that he gave himself up to their leadings. Long ago they had taught him to drink beer and use tobacco in every form. He detested both, at first, especially the beer, and thought he had never tasted anything so vile; but he wished to be addicted to it as a mark of manliness. He had been very drunk, once, and more than a little drunk several times. Of this his parents knew nothing,—the other boys kept him in a hay-mow over night till he sobered up. He woke up miserably sick, after that debauch, but he was prouder than ever before in all his life. Because he had been really and truly drunk, so drunk that he had to be carried, he fancied he had made a long step forward.

But that wasn't the worst. Along with those older boys and young men, who cherished him for his money, he got in the way of going to tough dances, out in the country. These were held at the house of some farmer not over particular, and plenty of liquor was the invariable accompaniment. At one of these dances Willie fell in love with a girl a year older than himself, and she made him believe she was very much in love with him. She was hardened to all manner of sin, and obtained a strong influence over him. He was even prouder of their wretched relations than he had been of getting drunk. To be in love, to have a woman of his own, that seemed to make him out

a man at once. On one occasion, at an uncommonly tough dance, another fellow tried to get the girl away from him, and they two had a fierce fight. The other fellow got the better of him and was beating him soundly, when Willie pulled a knife and stabbed the boy in the breast, and though he inflicted but a slight wound, he was thoroughly in a killing mood and felt only regret that he hadn't accomplished worse. On such food he fed his vanity, doubting not that he was not only a man, but a bad man, a very dangerous chap. He was for marrying the girl, hereupon, in order to make sure of her, and she avowed herself willing, but her father and mother found out what was in the wind and they were unalterably opposed. There was a sister still younger, who had likewise her lover, and they, too, would fain marry, only to be met with the parental interdict. This other lover and Willie, swelling with importance and affronted dignity, went out to the girls' home to overawe the old man, as they called him, and got themselves unceremoniously kicked off the porch.

By this insult they were made foaming angry. The old man had treated them like children, and nothing could be more injurious to their pride than that. His objection to their suit was frankly grounded on their extreme youth,—he wouldn't have his girls wasting their time with a couple of puppies who hadn't a penny except as their folks gave it to them. There was no enduring to let the matter rest there. They forthwith began, Willie proposing and the other boy assenting, to concert measures of vengeance.

It was no trifling reprisal which they hit upon.

"Will you believe," said Willie, looking up at Mr. Jakes in pained wonder, as if his story were a revela-

tion to himself, "that we have planned to go out there to-morrow night, and kill that man and woman?"

Not easy to believe, certainly. "You never would do such a thing," said Mr. Jakes aghast. "How could you?"

Willie groaned. "I wish I could say that,—I can't. The gun I was going to do my part with is hid in our barn this minute. It's a Winchester rifle I stole from the blacksmith-shop, and the other boy has a double-barreled shotgun, loaded with buckshot. The girls are in the scheme and will be looking for us as soon as it is dark. They are going to get the family bunched round the lamp in the front room, playing cards. We're to whistle, so the girls can get out of the way, and then we're to let drive with both guns, through the window. That's the plan, and only for what's happened to me to-day——"

It was too horrible. "Willie, Willie!" Mr. Jakes broke in. "It's a dream. You've been asleep and dreaming."

"No, no, it's all true,—I was going to do just as I tell you. I never held back a minute, or had any thought to give up. Sometimes I've wondered if the other boy was gritty enough, and I had my mind all made up, if he showed the white feather, I'd kill him too. I'd kill anybody that got in my way, to show them I wasn't to be trifled with."

"Oh, surely not, Willie. Think how little reason you had. If you wanted that bad girl, you could run away with her. You needn't kill anybody in order to get her."

"I wanted to kill somebody. I don't believe I cared so much about the girl as I did about doing something

that would make me out a bad man, that everybody would be afraid of."

None of the bad man about him now, though,—that spirit was all gone out. He heaved a big sigh,—the hardest part of his confession was done with,—and went on to better things:

"This morning I met some of the fellows, and they told me they were after your melons. They wanted me to go along. It was pretty small business, I thought, for a man like me, but it would help pass away the time, and so I went. When we saw you out there on the porch, the rest wanted to quit, but I was ashamed to run away, and I got them to go back. I wanted to show I wasn't afraid, and so I started pulling up the vines, and the others followed me. I wanted you to come out, so I could fight you. I had a dirk-knife in my coat and I wanted a chance to use it on you. I didn't seem to be thinking of a thing but acting bad, to make people afraid of me. But after we'd done the mischief and went away and I was alone, somehow I got to feeling queer. I couldn't tell why it was, but all the time I was thinking of you out there on the stoop and doing nothing to us for smashing your melons, and I was thinking, too, about your being a poor man and needing the money you'd get by selling the melons, and the first I knew I was sort of sorry for you. Then I tried to say I didn't care,—bad men never cared. I called you a coward for not doing something to stop us, or something to pay us back, but it wouldn't work, and pretty soon I was wondering if I wasn't a coward myself. I went and locked myself in the barn with my gun, and looked it over to see if it was all ready,—I thought that would keep my mind away from you, but it didn't. All the time I

could see you sitting there. I don't know how the idea got in my head, but one thing seemed to lead to another and before long the sight of the gun was making me sort of sick. I wanted to keep my mind on the great thing I was going to do, but somehow it didn't seem a great thing any more, to be shooting people through a window after dark, when they didn't have a chance for themselves. I remembered the girls, how they was willing to help kill their own mother, and I remembered my mother, and that was when I got to crying. I've been crying about ever since. I didn't go in to supper, and mother came calling me, and I couldn't face her for all the world. I answered her, though, and told her I didn't want any supper, and I could see she thought I was sick and she was worried, and somehow I understood better than ever how good a friend a mother is, and here I was getting those girls to help kill their mother. She wasn't a good woman, like my mother, but she was their mother just the same, and I was sicker and sicker, that is, in my mind. I told mother I'd rather walk awhile, and not to worry about me, but I know she did, and she's worrying now, but she'll be glad when she knows what's happened to me. I walked all over, not thinking where, and cried and cried, feeling awful bad when I thought of what I'd been going to do, and awful good when I remembered I hadn't done it yet, and I had you in mind all the time, and after awhile I turned down here, without really meaning to. Somehow it seemed as if you'd done a great thing for me, and I wanted to tell you and own up, but it wasn't easy to come in, and so I've been going back and forth for an hour, wishing to come in, but not knowing how, and then I came. This money is what I've been sav-

ing up to take me and the girl away. It's not near enough to pay for the melons, but I'm going to work to-morrow and earn more. I'm going to pay you every cent."

Mr. Jakes was so overjoyed that he shed tears himself, and embraced the boy, impulsively, like a Frenchman.

"You will keep your money," he cried. "My melons are paid for, a hundred times over. But you will go to work in the morning, and I will go to work with you. We two will go out together."

Tongues wagged when Afton saw the Reverend Mr. Jakes engaged in common labor in the fields. Of course everybody knew about the destruction of his melons, and how he had permitted it, or part of it at least. But astonishing as that conduct was, Afton found it less so than his complete omission of any steps looking to the punishment of the marauders. Squire Thornhill was keen to prosecute, but Mr. Jakes would do nothing, wouldn't undertake to identify a single boy.

Willie Sanders came in for considerable discussion, too, he was such a different fellow, so industrious, and so attached to Mr. Jakes. Willie's former companions gave him their unreserved contempt, saying he had got religion.

CHAPTER X

FEMINA EST VARIUM

THERE is often to be found, in the hamlet where everybody knows everybody, a certain woman whose chief part in life seems to be to keep jealous wives in a ferment. Her reputation is anything but good, yet nobody knows just how far she deserves it. On the surface she is dashing, decidedly pretty, has a style about her that is somewhat bold and free according to rustic standards, and that is all. As to what she may be under the rose there is only opinion, though a great diversity of that. Some believe her to be no worse than she appears, a species of hoyden grown up. But more are not so kind,—hence the uneasiness of wives who can't trust their husbands. For her own part, she apparently has no objection to being thought wicked,—she does any number of things she would never do if she cared to save her name.

In Afton this woman was Mrs. Troy.

She came there first to teach school, a mere girl then, black-eyed, saucy-nosed, a perfect little witch who forthwith upset pretty much every masculine creature in the bailiwick, not sparing even the boys in her classes. It was tradition that two young lads (men with families now) had instantly and simultaneously

fallen in love with her, and saw no way out but to fight to determine which should have her. And fight they did, ferociously, so that their elders found out about it, and there was an investigation, the upshot of which was a warning to the new teacher, from the trustees. And what did she do? She laughed gaily, called the two boys up before the whole school, kissed them heartily, and told them she had decided, on the whole, not to marry either of them. Very likely that was the best she could do for them, but Afton thought it an intolerably bold, wanton thing, and the little mistress straightway lost her place. That was the utmost outraged respectability could do against her, however. There was no forcing her to leave the village though that was the consummation devoutly to be wished for, and when she chose to remain, out of sheer spite, perhaps, help for it there was none. During some memorable months she ran riot, or what looked like riot to respectable Afton,—anyway there wasn't within the circuit of twenty miles a youth betwixt the ages of fifty and fifteen but confessed himself her slave, and she took every advantage of their infatuation, brazenly accepting their gifts and scrupling not to live on their bounty. The orgy ended, at least in its most flagrant aspect, with her marrying William Troy. Of all her suitors Troy was best off in a worldly way, a woodsman of the rank of boss, who never worked for less than \$5 a day. Besides, he was away from home considerably more than half his time,—unfriendly tongues made a good deal of that circumstance, and hinted that it had as much to do as any with determining the fair lady's choice.

Troy began with deeming himself the most favored of mortals, and he advertised his gratitude in a prodi-

gality fit to give great scandal among a people whose religion was thrift. He wasted his substance buying the costliest presents for his wife, till she blazed with jewels and her gowns were the wonder of the world. She had a sumptuous horse and buggy of her own kept at the livery-stable and brought to her ready as often as she sent word; and she put in a large part of her day driving up and down, flaunting her finery. A very favorite prank of hers was to overtake some prominent man, as he was walking home from his business, and ask him to ride with her. The man was rare who knew how to refuse, or, if he knew, made use of his knowledge; and so she would take him up, and set him down at his own door with a flourish and a flutter calculated to disturb the domestic peace, if anything could.

Troy professed to be amused by the woman's goings-on. He treated her as he might a child, whose innocence was sufficient apology for almost any waywardness. Like any other proud man, he was slow to admit, even to himself, that he was being dishonored. But there came a time when Afton, straining its eyes to catch the first intimation of the expected, began to see that the iron was entering his soul,—he let it appear that he was displeased with his wife. Especially was he offended by her freedom with her former suitors, his rivals,—that was like a man, too. These gentry had retired with their crests fallen, when she made bestowal of her hand, but they were presently given to understand that they needn't take their banishment too seriously. If they chose to call on her at her home, they weren't turned away, though she was alone there, and all Afton knew she was alone. Troy could not forever close his ears to rumor, nor

could pride blind him to what lay right in his path,—that was where it lay because the woman took no pains to conceal her doings. The second winter their house was the scene of such revels as the neighbors wouldn't have thought possible in a Christian community, and in the midst of the scandalous hilarity, the injured husband came home,—in February though his season didn't end till April,—and he tarried there, idle and gloomy and uneasy, till June, missing three drives on the river. There was a cloud of blackness on his brow, figuring the cloud of displeasure on his mind, yet nothing much happened. Folks asked themselves what had got into William Troy, always looked upon as a dangerous man, that he suffered himself to be so trampled on,—it amounted to no less, when the gay company kept on coming just as before, and revel ran high as ever, with feasting and laughter till far into the night. Nobody imagined Troy did much of the laughing, though he was present.

After two years a baby was born, and it proved to be deaf and dumb. Afton declared it a just judgment on the wanton, yet she had none of the air of being chastened. She hired a cheap girl to take care of the child, while she flaunted out in her silks and jewels, or remained at home to entertain her crew of admirers. The baby made her no better, worse if anything,—that was the general verdict.

Mr. Jakes had seen Mrs. Troy, often, but they had never spoken together,—their ways were about as diverse as ways could be. But one autumn day there came to him a messenger with a message, a slim young girl, who urgently summoned him to go at once to Mrs. Troy, for that she greatly wished to see him.

He hesitated, thinking a mistake had been made.

"Her baby is dying," said the girl, with a little sob which might be due to excitement more than grief.

Mr. Jakes remembered Beppo and the extreme unction. "It's the priest she wants," he said. "Over yonder," and he pointed to the Catholic rectory through the trees.

"No, it's you," urged the girl. "She told me to fetch Mr. Jakes. She told me to say to you to come, for the love of God."

He went.

Mrs. Troy met him at the door, greeted him quietly, and took him by the hand. She was haggard with anxiety and watching, but quite calm. She did not weep, nor did she seem to have been weeping, and her voice was firm and clear. Still holding him by the hand, she led him to an inner room,—the chamber of death, for death had already come. The child had breathed his last and lay still and cold.

Mr. Jakes met the mother's tearless eyes and his own gushed full. "I'm sorry for you," he faltered, brokenly, and indeed he was.

"Thank you," she said. "Will you hear my confession?"

Once more he thought there was a mistake. "I am not a priest," he said, doubtfully.

"You are priest enough for me," she answered, and smiled up at him, though her baby lay dead before them. It was a peculiar smile, such as he had never beheld,—not out of place.

"You wonder at my confidence in you," the woman went on, "and I wonder at it, too. When I tell you of the influence you have had over me you will wonder more, as I wonder myself,—I can't explain, it's a mystery to me. But there it is. Almost from my first

hearing of you I felt a strange interest in everything you did, and stranger still, it was an uncomfortable interest. Because it was uncomfortable I tried to be rid of it, to laugh it away,—I tried to despise you,—I tried everything. But after all the interest remained, and grew in spite of me, and at last it accused me. Oh, I cannot make you understand what this feeling has been to me, what it has done for me! You will think me flighty, you will think my trouble has affected my mind, but all the same I must say it,—you seem to me to have saved me from myself! I can't put it so truly any other way,—you have saved me!”

And with that she bent down her head and kissed his hand.

Mr. Jakes was made dumb and helpless; even though there had been in him the prudence of the ordinary man, he could not resist, so overcome was he. The woman did not let go his hand until she had brought him to a seat, and then only while she drew up a low stool for herself at his feet,—in a moment her fingers had closed tightly over his once more. Was there a quiver of reluctance on his part? Anyway there came, for an instant, a look of alarm in her face upturned to his, and she pleaded: “May I?”

She might,—it was not for him to repel her advances.

“They call me a bad woman, but you don't fear me, do you?” she said, coaxingly.

Fear her? No, not that. If he had been reluctant, he knew no reason why, in the face of her eager solicitude.

“I am a bad woman,” she exclaimed, “but not in the way people say. I was a thoughtless girl, and impulsive, and selfish, and when I found I had the power

to move the passions of men, it delighted me to use my power,—I had no sense of responsibility. Yet I was only what the Lord made me, and if I was sinful, my sin doesn't lie on my conscience. Nor have I sinned against my husband, more than that I haven't been kind to him, or willing to consider his feelings. I daresay I never loved him as I should,—very likely I was incapable of loving as a wife should. But if I did wrong in marrying him, I wasn't conscious of wrongdoing, so that doesn't lie on my conscience, either.

“The sin that weighs on me was against the life which has just gone out. I was resolved not to have any children. I abhorred motherhood, and was ready to do anything to avoid it,—to that end I resorted to all the abominable expedients. And when, in spite of all my wretched devices, I found I was about to become a mother, I tried to commit murder. I tried to destroy the life which had been given me to bring forth and nourish. And when I failed in that, and was a mother in spite of myself, I hated my baby. I cursed him. I wished nothing so much as that he might be stricken dead.”

Just here her fingers clutched hard,—she was struggling to control herself, the effort plainly visible in her haggard face. There was a considerable pause until she continued:

“Nature gave me plenty of food for the child, but I threw it away, and took a bitter satisfaction in doing so. I couldn't bear to touch my baby, I hated him so. I saw he was weakly, and was glad, for the greater hope it gave me that he would die. I dared not kill him, now that he was born, but I was willing. In my heart I murdered him a thousand times.

“When it turned out that he was deaf and dumb,

I hated him all the more. I thought of the burden of care which this meant, if he lived, and I was furious. I could have struck him as he lay in his cradle, I was so angry. Once I saw my husband take the baby up and cry over him, and I was beside myself. I wanted all the pity for my own, and I said I wished the boy might die, the sooner the better. My husband answered that a child born to such a mother were better dead. That day I was nearer to committing a wife's great sin than ever in my life,—I only lacked the opportunity, my will was sufficient.

"You find it hard to believe? You don't know a woman. You don't know what a fiend she is when once she sets her will against her natural instincts.

"That was when I first began to hear of you. What was it I heard? I can't say,—many things, though nothing remarkable. The men who came to see me made jokes about you,—called you a little tin Jesus. I tried to think that very funny, but somehow I couldn't—that feeling was coming on me. The more I laughed at your ways, the more I had to compare them with my own ways, and it grew and grew on me that I was wrong. The crisis came one night,—I woke up to find my face wet with tears, and I was yearning for my baby. I ran to his cradle and took him up and pressed him to my breast so hard that he cried. It was a great misery and still a great joy, for it seemed as if the more I suffered the more I atoned for the wrong I had done,—I can't describe the experience,—I never heard of anything like it. I went down on my knees and prayed that the boy might live that I might spend all my life in devotion to him, that I might be allowed to make up to him something of what I had deprived him of. I didn't doubt that his

being deaf and dumb was my fault; and I wanted him to live so that I might give my voice and my ears wholly to him.

“When he fell sick I knew he was going to die, and still I prayed. I hoped against hope, for it was a terrible sorrow to face. Who ever had such a sorrow? Think of it! Yet I can thank God now,—there’s something I can be thankful for,—I shall never cease to bless God for not taking my baby while yet I was in that darkness, when I should have been glad to have him die. Is it not something that my boy has lived until his death is a sorrow and not a joy?

“I owe it to you,—I cannot tell you how, but I am sure. I don’t know what sent you here to this corner of the world,—I don’t know what sent me here,—God is good, even to the one who denies Him. He has been good to me.”

Again she bent down her head and kissed his hand, and again he did not resist,—nay more, he gave her back her kiss. Mr. Jakes forgot that she was a woman and he a man, forgot all that such caresses commonly signify,—to him the figure bowed at his feet was a soul in agony, a soul in trial. He tenderly brushed the dark disordered curls away from her brow, and kissed her as she had kissed him.

CHAPTER XI

THE MAN OF WRATH

THERE was a perfect whirlwind of talk when Mrs. Troy became a regular attendant at the Unitarian Church. Her very first appearance there was enough to start a breeze. Two or three more appearances increased this to a gale, so to say, and when a dozen appearances, on as many consecutive Sundays, put her in the light of a regular attendant, the whirlwind rose, and raged up and down, till Afton was about overturned.

Moreover, what were people to think of the change in the woman, in respect of her weekday goings-out and comings-in?

She flaunted herself no more. The horse and buggy were sold, and leading men were suffered to go their peaceful ways, no more to be snatched up and carried off in a flutter of bright ribbons and vivacity. Mrs. Troy went very little abroad, these days, and she always walked, demurely, with her eyes cast down. The jewels vanished from the public sight,—they were sold, too. And gowns? Not only were her gowns severely plain, henceforth, and of material far from costly, but there was the consolation, as bewildering as unlooked-for, of observing that these gar-

ments were not particularly becoming, and that they didn't even fit. The skirts sagged, and the waists bunched up, and it was certain that Mrs. Troy was making her own clothes,—the identical Mrs. Troy who had been known to go to a man's tailor in the city and pay him as much as \$50 for making up a single suit.

People perceived very quickly what they were to think,—there was only one thing to think, in fact. Wasn't it as plain as the nose on your face that this designing hussy had set her cap for Mr. Jakes? What could be better calculated to gain her favor in his eyes than just such proceedings as these?

To be sure there was the logical difficulty as to what any woman should find in him to attract her. Mr. Jakes was pulled to bits, and the bits poked about endlessly, yet there was disclosed not the first element of attractiveness. Handsome? As far from it as possible,—this stooped and shuffling fellow, with his lean face and muddy complexion. If his eyes were remarkable, it was not in a way to make a person fond of him. They were uncanny eyes, in fact. Just about that time there appeared in somebody's newspaper the portrait of a much mentioned actor in the character of Svengali, and it was quite the universal exclamation that the eyes in that were Mr. Jakes's eyes all over again when Mr. Jakes was roused up; and when he wasn't roused up, his eyes were dull. Plenty of women were ready to declare that nothing could induce them to live with a man who had such eyes,—they'd be deathly afraid of him.

However, fortunately for the progress and prosperity of the scandal, it wasn't necessary to discover what Mrs. Troy found in Mr. Jakes, in order to be-

lieve that she was in hot pursuit of him,—the difficulty, though insoluble, was not fatal. Love is an immense mystery and goes where it is sent. Mrs. Troy was in love with the parson, account for it as you would or not at all. This woman, till now the flame for moths to singe their wings in, untouched of the passion she so strongly moved in her victims, who had trifled with all men, showing favor to none unless by courtesy her marrying Troy could be called a favor,—here she was openly advertising a preference for Jakes, and packing the others off without ceremony; for now she received no company whatever. Excepting Jakes? No, not even excepting Jakes. The chosen lover was never seen at her house, and her house was watched so closely that his calling unseen was practically out of the question. That might be deemed a difficulty, too, but Afton disposed of it by saying it was a part of the game.

On no better food than Mrs. Troy's altered conduct scandal fed and flourished, but there was much stronger meat forthcoming,—by the hand of the girl who had been Mrs. Troy's nurse, the messenger who had summoned Mr. Jakes to that extraordinary interview.

This young person went by the name of Tildy. Tildy lost her place when the baby died, for a resolution to do all her own work was a part of Mrs. Troy's new character. It had been a good place, easy work and generous wages promptly paid, and the girl wasn't pleased to give it up. Indeed, she thought herself in some manner aggrieved and conceived a grudge against her former mistress, the more as she had nowhere to go but back on the farm, to dig potatoes, and husk corn.

She was not to be forgotten of the world of Afton, however.

A group of good women, casually met one day and considering Mrs. Troy and Mr. Jakes if haply anything new might be brought to light, were penetrated with a happy thought,—they remembered Tildy, how that she had been Mrs. Troy's girl and by that in a position to know something, possibly a great deal. And not less happy than the thought was the expedient it led to. None of these women really needed, or could rightly afford, hired help, but they were willing to make a sacrifice for the public good, and the upshot was that they agreed among themselves to give Tildy employment, turn and turn about, until she should have been pumped dry.

Tildy's sense of grievance made her ready, and no great art was necessary to draw her out,—disclosures beyond anybody's fondest dreams followed shortly on her return from the country. Tildy (think of it!) had peeked through the crack of a door and seen Mrs. Troy and Mr. Jakes sitting as close together as ever they could get, and holding hands, and kissing,—actually kissing! Mrs. Troy had kissed Mr. Jakes's hand and Mr. Jakes had kissed Mrs. Troy's forehead. What else took place had to be guessed, for the reason that Tildy had become terribly frightened, at that, and ran away; but guessing wasn't hard.

There had never been a divorce case in Afton, or anywhere nearer then Tellerville, but in this situation how could the supreme felicity be long withheld? If William Troy had left in him a spark of manhood, there would be a divorce case of the tastiest sort, right away, a case as highly spiced as the most fastidious could ask. Papers were likely to be forthcoming any

day,—just as soon as Troy should get wind of the business, there must inevitably be papers,—and papers meant a delirious publicity.

Troy wasn't let to be long getting wind. The common interest would see that the wind blew straight-way to him, and that it was abundantly redolent with the scandal. The story came to him from a dozen different sources all at once, but he was bossing a big camp that winter, it wasn't at all convenient for him to leave,—he shut his teeth together and paid no attention. Pretty soon, however, he got a letter, and that set him on fire. Nobody had ever seen him in such a flame; he dropped everything regardless of consequences, and set off for home with a look in his face which boded mischief. He arrived, and the look was still there. Afton saw it, and fell into a quiver of expectancy. There was no telling, any more,—a divorce case didn't begin to comprehend the possibilities.

A brew of trouble, certainly, even as it stood revealed, saying nothing of sundry elements which the public wot not of. For such there were, and especially there was that other cap which had been set for Mr. Jakes,—the cap of Nannie Jones.

Nannie was a spinster, thirty odd, of a turn for matrimony and no longer fastidious. How could she well be so? A village of a few hundred souls, affording its girls just a sufficient taste of urbanity to set them above marrying farmers, and by its barrenness of opportunity sending its eligible boys away to seek their fortune elsewhere,—well, to make a long and painful story short, no bachelor was to be despised. Nannie thought so, in effect, the first time she heard that Mr. Jakes was a bachelor. The first time she saw him she decided that he would do very nicely.

That was the day of the inaugural, and he was greeted by no warmer praise than Mistress Nannie's, when she came up with her father and mother and was introduced by the squire.

She was vexed with but little, if any, of the tender sentiment, at first,—only with the wish to have a husband, most any kind of a husband. But as time wore on, Nannie fell in love with Mr. Jakes, really and truly in love, till at length she adored him, and would blush softly as often as she thought of him, though that should keep her blushing most always, and won her many a compliment on the healthy color she was getting. In her gentle, thin-blooded way, she was presently suffering all the miseries of lovesickness, sighing and pining and building castles in the air, and seeing Mr. Jakes in everything. Nannie was a thoroughly good girl, scrupulously correct in her behavior. She helped her mother and was patient with her father. It had once been usual for people to say that she would certainly make some man a good wife, some day, and though that manner of acknowledgment had fallen into disuse, her worth was never aspersed by a lisp.

Was Nannie wholly to blame for the desperate resolution which made her stoop, for the first time in her life, to deceit? Or had the common human nature which was hers without her asking something to answer for? Whether or no, she stooped to deceit. She heard the stories. She fancied Mrs. Troy was her rival. She burned with jealousy, and in her passion was transformed.

And even apart from the stories, she found reason to be alarmed. Mr. Jakes's manner toward her argued, to her distracted mind, that his heart was already

engaged. Though she wooed him with every art open to a woman who hasn't thrown modesty completely to the winds, he was unresponsive. She visited him at his house, first with her mother, and then, in an access of boldness which made her tremble, alone. She professed to be anxious about her soul, to wish to talk about its perilous state; and that was her first deceit, for she had in truth come to the pass where she would be a thousand times glad to give her soul for her love, and knew no perdition save disappointment in that love. She was gushing and confidential, but he was uneasy and absent. She laid bare her heart, for any man to see who had half an eye, but he saw nothing. She proposed to him the predicament of a good, pure girl, who had conceived a feeling for a man before he, on his part, had shown any decided preference for her. Was that sinful in her? Would it be a sin if she were to declare her feeling to the man? Mr Jakes mumbled that he would rather not express an opinion, his experience was too small to warrant him, and all that sort of thing; and Nannie left him bowed down with chagrin. But she was more resolved than ever. She soon plucked up courage and cast about her for new ways of approach, all in the foolish, blind, simple fashion of an innocent old maid.

She brushed up her botany. Years ago, in her young girlhood, she had dipped into botany with an uncommonly talented teacher in the village school, and progressed so far as to have identified the ordinary Crowsfoot of the spring woods with the *Ranunculus Abortivus* of the books,—no very brilliant achievement, but quite sufficient to exhaust her slender fund of mental force. Now, however, her heart gave strength to her brain,—she had a new reason to be studious.

She took it for granted that Mr. Jakes liked botany, or could be got to like it, and on that ground she built her fond belief that botany would be the means of bringing them together. She buried herself in the pages of Gray's Manual,—it was hard work, but unspeakably delicious, cheered as it was with rosy visions of Mr. Jakes and herself wandering over grassy fields and bosky dells, forgetful of all else but themselves, making pretext of their quest while they knit their lives forever together. She made a collection,—mounted a number of pressed plants on sheets of paper, as her teacher had shown her how to do, and wrote a neat label for each, with the Latin name. She was by no means sure that she always picked out the right name, but why should that matter?

Then she had the minister to tea.

He came stumbling up, awkward and silent, making the occasion funereal in spite of all the anxious little hostess could do. After tea Nannie brought out her specimens, with a fluttering heart, and showed them to him. He stared at them dully and handed them back without a word. She asked him if he was interested in botany, and he replied that he wasn't.

After that the gentle Nannie fell rapidly into the character of the woman scorned, whose like is not among all the furies. She struggled feebly, though it was her utmost, to give up her love for Mr. Jakes, and when she could not, she hated Mrs. Troy with a bitterness incredible. There was no happiness for Nannie but to possess Mr. Jakes,—how else should she regard the creature who stood in her way unless with hatred? The sentiment itself was natural enough,—only the intensity of it was incredible. How should such a black passion find harbor in a

bosom so meek and innocent? But harbor it found, and it was black enough to drive Nannie to her worst deceit,—a very grave deceit indeed, in view of what it was likely to lead to. She wrote to Troy, up in the the woods, a lying letter. She had her own purpose to serve, and she wrote for that, regardless of truth. Apart from her purpose she thought very little of the probable consequences. All she cared for was to work on the man in such a way that he would come home and take care of his wife. Nannie heard the talk about a divorce but it made no definite impression on her. She never stopped to reflect that her interference was likely to bring about a legal separation which would leave Mrs. Troy free to marry Mr. Jakes; and equally blind was she to the danger of starting a quarrel which might end in serious harm to her beloved, not impossibly his death at the hands of the injured husband whose anger she was striving to stir up. All she could think of was that if Troy were roused, to do his duty, her path would be made clear.

It was Nannie's letter which brought Troy down from the woods in a towering rage. It did precisely what she wished it to do,—it made him feel his dishonor. It was a wonderful letter, in its way,—it achieved great things in tearing wide the wretched man's wound and setting him wild with the pain thereof.

So much for the invisible undercurrent which Afton wot not of.

Troy came over from Tellerville with Tronson the carrier, and Tronson always declared that he never spoke a word the whole way, only glowered and chewed up unlighted cigars. Tronson wouldn't be surprised if Bill chewed up as many as a dozen cigars,

and all of them ten-centers, if not better. There was the usual crowd waiting for the mail, but Troy greeted nobody, looked neither to the right nor the left, gave no intimation of his intentions, further than that he went straight to his home. Daniel the pensioner, a wag of the species who deem a joke no joke unless it lacerates somebody's feelings, had a mind to rally Troy a bit, and his age and high standing permitted him to make the attempt. He remarked, in an ironical vein, on the early break-up of the logging season, and winked significantly at the bystanders; but Troy turned away with such a harried, pained expression mingling with the sternness in his face that nobody laughed and Daniel himself was so touched as to admit he was sorry, blame him if he wasn't. He was sorry for Bill Troy, a likely man,—as likely a man as could be scared out of the bush. It was too bad, blame Daniel if it wasn't.

"He's a mighty sight too good a man to be troublin' himself over the doin's of any sech a woman," the pensioner insisted, with a vehement jerk of his head. "She haint wuth so much as the dirt a good man will tread under his feet, a-steppin' once," he went on, with rising feeling. But that wasn't the proper part of so true a philosopher,—in a moment he fell back into his habitual vein of calm reflection: "Beats all, what a power of hell one bad woman kin raise with two good men. Bill Troy's a good man an' for aught I know Mr. Jakes is a good man, an' jest look at 'em! We may see 'em a-killin' one another, all over a wuthless, good-for-nothin' hussy."

This was to make no overstatement of the possibilities, as Afton at large saw them, and you will make no doubt that Troy was watched. Argus him-

self had fewer eyes and less greedy than followed the stalwart woodsman till he disappeared beyond the portals of his own house. The first impression, taking account of the provocation and of Troy's manner in the face of it, was that whatever was done would be done quickly. Seizing upon the probabilities as they presented themselves, Afton had no difficulty in forming a definite expectation, the sum of which was that Troy would stay in the house only long enough to have a terrible scene with his wife (the suggestion wasn't lacking that he would most likely kill her, but opinion generally shrank from looking for anything like that), after which he would come out and go after Mr. Jakes. That was where the shudderful part promised to come in. Troy was understood to have furnished himself with a shooting-iron,—there was no authority for saying so, but that would never keep it from being understood, under the circumstances.

Troy arrived about ten o'clock. The sun mounted to its height and began its descent, and beheld nothing more sanguinary than Afton waiting and watching still, for Troy had not come out. It was dinner-time. What about dinner, anyway, in such a posture of affairs? The difficulty was variously met. Some went absolutely dinnerless rather than run the risk of not being on hand to see what there should be to see. Some,—the more opulent or ruthless of expense,—bought crackers and cheese at the grocery. Some, and they were perhaps the majority, plunged home, snatched a morsel, and plunged back, eagerly asking if anything had happened, in their absence.

Nothing had happened. As the event proved, everybody might have gone home to dinner, and eaten

leisurely, and taken his time about getting back, yet have missed nothing.

It was precisely half past one in the afternoon, when word, winging through a multitude grown negligent with weariness and hope deferred, brought on a rapid concentration, a forward movement all along the line, with a quickening of pulses and a holding of breaths, —Troy had come out at last. But on the very heels of the first rumor followed another, very dampening, —Troy had indeed come out, but only to get an armful of wood and go back. He was in his shirtsleeves and looked rather domestic than otherwise.

He showed himself no more at all, that day. At night lamps were lighted in the house, and Mrs. Troy was seen to pass from window to window, drawing the curtains,—so far as Afton could make out, by such a mere glimpse, she was quite herself.

Afton went to bed with a distinct sense of having been cheated.

Next day the watch was resumed, with a certain languor. It had to be confessed that the likelihood of any very sensational outcome was about faded away, while the likelihood of the man and his wife coming to some sort of an understanding, peaceable if not friendly, was fast approximating a certainty. About the most that could be expected, the first day having gone by without visible developments, was a divorce-case, and while that had once been looked forward to as a racy outcome, it was pretty tame in comparison with the gun-play which had since seemed to impend.

But now the watch did not go unrewarded. Somewhere not far from nine o'clock (people had given up making close note of the time in the view that nothing much was going to happen anyway) the door was

opened, and Mr. and Mrs. Troy came out together, and walked away together, toward the post-office. They didn't speak to each other, but on the other hand there was no marked coldness between them,—their air was about that of any couple who had been married some time. Troy nodded to now and then an acquaintance as he passed, and if it was not quite as if there were nothing in the wind, he wasn't so very ill at ease,—at all events the bodeful look of yesterday was gone. Mrs. Troy, as her wont had become, these days, kept her eyes on the ground.

Where were they going? To the post-office, perhaps, merely to show themselves in company. No,—when they reached the stairway leading to Squire Thornhill's office, they turned in there, and the next moment were lost to sight once more, with Afton staring blankly after them.

What, in the name of all the gods at once, did it mean?

The common sense of having been cheated was much intensified. There began to rise dark doubts as to there being even a divorce-case. When it was proposed that the only purpose the Troys could have in repairing to a lawyer's office, that way, was to draw up articles for an amicable separation, hardly a voice was heard in dissent. And you know how chagrin paves the way for resentment. Here was a kind of affront, and Afton, getting its breath, proceeded to avenge itself as it might. It loaded Mrs. Troy with reproaches. It loaded Mr. Jakes with reproaches. But most especially, since it had long since said its worst about these two, it loaded Bill Troy with reproaches. Bill Troy was no man. Bill Troy had shown himself a coward. Bill Troy ought to be

ashamed to let his face be seen, after swallowing his disgrace so meekly.

Meanwhile, up in the squire's office, the drama was culminating,—if anything so mild could be considered, in view of what had gone before, a culmination. And first of all, Mrs. Troy was making an affidavit,—in perfect composure, without a quaver or any hesitation whatever, she declared herself, while the squire took down her words and brought them into legal form. When she was done she held up her hand and took the oath, steadily, though with an unusual color in her cheeks and an unusual sparkle in her fine black eyes.

“And now,” she said, when the declaration was duly signed and sealed, “that I have denied, on my oath, that I am guilty of the wrong I am accused of, I wish to say a word more to my husband, in your presence, Mr. Thornhill. I wish to confess to him, before you, that although I have not committed that particular sin which scandal has led him to suspect me of, I have not been a good wife. I married him, I now fear, without loving him. I wasted his earnings, and I made his heart anxious with my imprudent acts. But, God help me! that is all past. Henceforth I have no wish in the world but to be faithful to him, to all the obligations of wifehood, in thought and in deed,—to do by him as a woman should do by her husband. I cannot hope always to make good my intentions, but I shall try my best, and never weary of trying. It is certain that I am a better woman and a better wife than I ever was before, and I say to you, my husband, and to you, Mr. Thornhill, that this change in me, this miracle of grace, has been wrought by Mr. Jakes. So much there is between him and me. How he has done this thing, I but dimly understand myself, but of the thing

itself there can be no doubt. My husband, instead of blaming him, instead of suspecting him of doing evil against you, instead of harboring hate toward him, you ought to be thanking him, from the bottom of your heart, for having saved you from the viper in your bosom, for having transformed that viper into a human woman.

“But I must not stop with telling you what you ought to do. You have threatened Mr. Jakes. You have avowed to me your intention of killing him, at the first opportunity. With all sympathy and sorrow for what you have suffered at my hands, I here and now warn you to visit none of my sinning upon that just man. I warn you not to do him any the least violence. I warn you that if you put so much as a straw in his way, to make him trouble, it will be the worse for you.”

Troy did not open his lips to speak, from first to last, but sat by, listening moodily, and chewing hard at his cigar. There was a hardness in his face,—the implied threat went against the grain, and you would guess that the man was by no means giving up his fell designs. But when his wife, having spoken thus plainly, rose and went over to him, and laid her arm about his neck, and kissed him, tears sprang to his eyes,—you could see the anger and the hatred melting under that touch. And so they went out, back to their home, through the gaping crowd.

Afton?

It was like being played with. The Fates had a string to their stone,—just as it was about to splash grandly, they jerked it back. Could anything be more trying to the patience of a people long deprived?

Afton was sore,—no mistake about that.

CHAPTER XII

SALT WITHOUT SAVOR

AFTER two years of ministry, Mr. Jakes lost the favor of Squire Thornhill, and that was the beginning of the end.

The Troy scandal affected the squire against his pastor no more than the Torrelson scandal before it had done,—probably less, in fact, since the credit of the church was doubly involved. Mrs. Troy had become a regular attendant at the shrine of pure Christianity, and how was a religious man, a pillar of the faith, to think the worse of her for that? The suggestion that a wrongful passion for Mr. Jakes was the woman's real motive Thornhill wouldn't for a moment take seriously,—it was too absurd. What had happened to her was only what was likely to happen to any sinner under a proper preaching of the gospel,—she had experienced a change of heart, was converted, was genuinely born again in the spirit. Mr. Jakes had been imprudent, none franker than the squire to confess that, and more's the pity,—it was any man's place and a clergyman's especially, to shun even the appearance of evil, and kissing and holding hands with a pretty woman carried the appearance of evil if anything did. But was it not the admirable kindness of the fellow which prompted the imprudence, and his

admirable simplicity which suffered it? Though Mr. Jakes's friends might wish him a little more endowed with the wisdom of the serpent, they were more than ever convinced that his innocence was the innocence of the dove. No, Mr. Jakes lost no favor with the squire on account of Mrs. Troy—his fall from grace in that quarter came about in another way entirely.

The Thornhill homestead, as already pointed out, had long enjoyed the distinction of being the finest in Afton, if not in all the county, and when the Catholics set out, in a fateful day, to build a residence for their pastor which should be far and away finer, it was like casting the squire in the shade, a part which he was not at all fitted to endure in silence and humility. No sooner had the news of what impended got abroad than he was heard inveighing against the wicked and oppressive tax which an arrogant Romish priesthood was fastening on a parish of free American citizens. There was no denying that the Catholics were for the most part poor people whose ordinary and inevitable burdens were almost too much for them, and once the squire had raised the cry, others saw the point and joined in. But nobody's vehemence quite equalled his,—he was loudest in condemnation, outspoken on all occasions and unstintedly severe.

"Jakes," said he, broaching the matter to his pastor, "why don't you get after that Catholic priest? He ought to be skinned alive and his hide hung on the fence."

Mr. Jakes looked so startled that the squire laughed, in spite of the weight of his indignation.

"Figuratively, of course," he said, with a lofty wave of his hand. "What I mean is that he ought to be showed up and denounced. He's a robber and it's

your business to get after robbers, especially robbers the law can't reach. We need more of the spirit of the church militant. Attack wrong in the concrete, Jakes,—in the concrete. Abstract truth is all right as far as it goes, but it don't go far enough. I can be frank with you, can't I?"

Certainly,—the franker the better.

"Well, then, we're too dull and prosy. And besides, if we let wrong go unrebuked, we're *particeps criminis*, if I know the meaning of the term."

If the squire knew the meaning of the term, Mr. Jakes did not,—his blank face testified to that. But his face was troubled, too,—he caught the main drift.

"Maybe you don't know what the chap is up to?" fumed the squire.

Probably not,—Mr. Jakes admitted that he wasn't well informed.

"Well, he's building himself a palace, and forcing his poverty-stricken flock to pay for it. They're ignorant, superstitious foreigners, and they fear him. They believe they've got to do as he tells them,—they're shackled by their superstition. Shackled, Jakes! They imagine he can send them either to hell or to heaven, just as he pleases, and he uses his power over them to feather his own nest. He literally takes the hard-earned bread right out of their mouths, so that he may live in a palace. He ought to be denounced. You can't do a fitter thing than pull his monstrous pretensions to pieces, and the pretensions of the Catholic Church in general. Who knows but you may be the means of freeing these unhappy people from their slavery, as Luther was, and John Knox,—and Emerson? It's the chance of a lifetime, Jakes. You've got your spurs to win. Don't let

this magnificent opportunity pass unimproved. If you do you'll regret it to the end of your days."

It was fierily put, but somehow Mr. Jakes did not inflame. His distress plainly grew on him. But there wasn't a thing about him that looked like taking fire.

"I don't know," he faltered, indecisively.

Thornhill had another torch to apply.

"There's a widow-woman down in your end of the town," he went on, hotly. "She's the mother of five helpless children, and she supports them by taking in washing. She's an honest, though misguided woman, and she works like a horse at the hardest kind of work, for the most beggarly wages. I'm told there are times when that family goes to bed hungry because there's no food in the house, and anybody can see they've no more clothes than they need. She's a Catholic, and devout, and what does she get for it? This lordly priest commands her to pay him \$10 towards his new house. Think of it! Doesn't it make your blood boil? It does mine, and I don't care who knows it. I'm no advocate of violence, but I confess I'd be almost willing to help take this priest out of his warm bed some night and ride him on a rail out of town, with a jacket of tar and feathers to keep him from taking cold. His practices ought not to be tolerated in a civilized community."

If Mr. Jakes's blood boiled, in concert with the squire's, it did so in very quiet, inner fashion. But he pricked up his ears, so to say, at the story of the widow, and said he would go and see her.

"Half-baked, after all! Common clay, when it comes to the pinch! Moral coward!" So the squire muttered, to himself, after they parted,—his attitude was shifting ominously.

Mr. Jakes was as good as his word,—he went to see the widow right away. He found the pretext ready to his hand,—she had a small parcel of ground planted to garden-truck, but with her many other duties, more urgent, she was forced to neglect it, and the weeds were running riot. That was Mr. Jakes's opportunity,—he came over with his hoe in his hand. He found the woman laboring at her tubs, outside, under the shade of a great maple.

"May I hoe your garden for you, ma'am?" said he.

She stopped to stare at him, through her clouds of steam. She had a pleasant face, even though the prevailing sentiment in it, at the moment, was distrust.

"You do be the parson?" she said.

Mr. Jakes nodded. "They call me that," he answered.

"And what for should the likes of you be hoeing gardens for the likes of me?" she demanded, and then, as the mercenary motive presented its familiar aspect to her mind, she added: "I can't pay you anything."

"There'll be nothing to pay," said Mr. Jakes. "I see your garden needs hoeing, and I know you haven't much time, and I have a lot, and I wish you'd let me help you out."

The smile that broke over the widow's rosy face lighted it up as the rising sun lights the face of the morning.

"If I wasn't near old enough to be the mother of ye, I'd sure have my suspicions!" she cried, and doubled herself up with laughter. And Mr. Jakes laughed, too,—the humor of the situation made them good friends forthwith.

The garden was very small indeed. No part of it was far from the tubs under the maple, and while Mr. Jakes hoed and the woman washed they kept up a pretty steady conversation. They spoke of a number of things,—first of all the common things that common people talk about. When these common things were exhausted, the woman grew confidential,—told about herself and her troubles, and about her hopes, which were built on her children. She introduced the little folks, one by one, as they chanced to put in an appearance. Four of them were girls, but her especial pride was the fifth, a toddling boy.

“He’s to be a priest, God willing,” she said, with swelling bosom.

After that she was silent for a little, while she bobbed vigorously up and down over her washboard. When she straightened up again, there was a shade of anxiety in her clear blue eyes.

“You’re such a fine young man, it’s a pity you’re a heretic,” she said, bluntly. “It’s a pity you haven’t the true faith. Ah, me! how can people be such unbelievers?” and she heaved a mighty sigh.

“Tell me about this true faith of yours,” said Mr. Jakes, showing that he was greatly interested.

She was willing, a thousand times willing. Of course she couldn’t tell him all about it, because that would take too long, but she would tell him something. Who knew but it might be for the saving of his soul, please God? Now there was confession, to begin with that. How could a body possibly live without confession? Oh, the dreadful load of sin piling up and piling up till it was near choking you, and then you go to confession and have it all lifted off—“Whe—

ew!" Not otherwise could the widow indicate the relief it was.

Her countenance was ablaze with joy, confronting him. "It's when you've troubles come on you that you find out what Holy Mother Church is!" she exclaimed, eagerly, forgetful of her washing and leaning her dripping arms on the rim of the tub. "It's like having your own mother always by you, to run and put your head in her lap when things go wrong. God has laid his hand heavy on me, but he hasn't let me be born a heretic, blessed be He!"

Then she bethought herself, and flew at the work again, and there was another silence. It was broken by Mr. Jakes.

"You have to pay a good deal in support of your church, don't you?" he said.

"A good deal is it?" she rejoined, a little nettled, as if a sore spot had been touched. "And whose is the money but the dear Lord's, anyway? Every bit of it! And if He lets me keep enough to feed me and my babies, who am I to begrudge him the rest? And besides, it gets me to think of the church more as my own. I gave \$5 for the new altars, and when I pray before them I think of that, and I believe God thinks of it, too. I gave \$5 for the bell, too, and it is the greater comfort when I hear it calling me. And now I'm just after giving \$10 to the new house. Thanks be to God, I had it to give. Father Clancy he spoke to me and he says, 'Mrs. Hugh,' says he, 'we expect \$10 of you,' and I says, right back, 'Father Clancy,' says I, 'I've got the money ready for you, glory be to God!' that was what I said."

It took all of two afternoons to hoe the garden, and in that time the widow, though she carried on her

washing fairly well, managed to say much. And more than once she cried out, all radiant with laughter, that if she wasn't near old enough to be the mother of him, why, just naturally she should have her suspicions. And anyway, she wanted to save his soul. The pity was so fine a young man should be a heretic, and a stranger to the consolations of the true faith.

Some days later, the minister and the squire met again.

"Hello, Jakes!" said Thornhill, affecting his usual brisk cordiality. "By the way, when are you going to get after our friend Clancy, the wolf in sheep's clothing?"

Mr. Jakes shook his head, and the squire concealed his displeasure no longer.

"Will you neglect to denounce an open and unblushing wrong?" he demanded.

Mr. Jakes did not answer and the squire bridled.

"Perhaps you don't believe me when I tell you he has wrung \$10 out of that poor washerwoman?" he blustered.

"I went to see the woman," Mr. Jakes replied, quietly.

"Of course she doesn't know she's a gudgeon. All the more reason why you should speak out, for her enlightenment and the enlightenment of others like her."

Once more Mr. Jakes did not answer, yet his silence argued no uncertainty. That was the provoking part of it, the placid indifference with which the man heard this trumpet call to duty. The squire was getting red in the face.

"Certainly you don't wish me to believe that you tolerate this Romish superstition, that you have any-

thing for it but unrelenting hatred?" he snarled, bitterly to intimate his own attitude.

Silence, only silence,—Mr. Jakes was gazing off into space almost as if he hadn't heard a word.

The squire rose to that lofty level of moral sublimity where loud talk has no place. "Do you," he asked, in tones subduedly conversational but freighted with deep meaning, "decline to denounce this man Clancy?"

"I have no such fruit to show as he has,—how should I denounce him? I only wish the faith I preach were capable of making a soul so good and brave as the faith which Clancy preaches has made that washer-woman."

So spake Mr. Jakes. The squire was going to say something, but he choked over it, checked himself and ended with turning abruptly on his heel and hurrying away.

The new rectory went up, the Thornhill mansion was no longer the finest in the village, and a very robust and persistent rumor was accusing Mr. Jakes of wandering after strange gods. What was Mr. Jakes's faith, anyway? The squire took time to cool off and think the matter over, but he wasn't the less offended for that,—he was only the more adroit in his manner of striking back. He it was who started the rumor, but in such a way that nobody but himself knew how it began. What he did was to broach, very delicately and in selected quarters, the question as to Mr. Jakes's faith,—what did the pastor believe, anyway? He confessed, when the rumor had got fairly on its feet, to sundry misgivings, and as time passed and the congregation were more and more concerned over the business, these misgivings grew on him till he was saying,

more in sorrow than in anger, that Mr. Jakes wasn't any sounder, doctrinally, than he should be. Urged to specify, the squire put on his most portentous air and hoarsely whispered that Mr. Jakes was infected with Jesuitism.

Dreadful! Nothing, of course, could so pollute the fanes of the true Christianity as an infection of Jesuitism.

The squire was willing to justify the belief that was in him. In the strictest confidence, that is to say, in such a way that it was all over town before night, he repeated what Mr. Jakes had said about the faith which Father Clancy preached. That was damning enough, to be sure, but it wasn't all. Corroboratively, there was Cecilia and the gesture she had seen Mr. Jakes make that eventful evening when first the new minister broke bread under the squire's roof. Cecilia had testified at once, first to her mother and then to her father, but Thornhill was highly pleased with his pastor just then, and that made a great difference. The squire's feelings were the major premise all through, and now that they were made sore by Mr. Jakes's flagrant contumacy, that which he had waved away as a trifle was recalled and made much of. It was a masterly touch when Thornhill blamed himself for not having taken warning at once. How could he have been so blind? The congregation were profoundly affected. Hints of a Jesuit conspiracy began to be heard, and what could be more terrifying, all things considered, than a Jesuit conspiracy? Of course the squire didn't believe there was any sort of a conspiracy, but for the purpose he had formed there need be a public sentiment aroused, of a strong character,

and so the story that Rome had designs on Afton got abroad.

This purpose, briefly, was to bring Mr. Jakes to some sort of trial before the world, with the squire himself in the part of prosecutor. Heresy trials were filling considerable space in the newspapers, in those days, and why shouldn't Afton come in for some of the fame, and, along with Afton, the squire?"

There were difficulties, to be sure, even after an adequate public sentiment had been worked up. Imprimis, nobody had ever heard of a heresy trial in a Unitarian church,—so far as the available records disclosed, there was no precedent for such a procedure. But the squire's enterprise was not to be dashed. He wouldn't have a heresy trial, in the ordinary sense,—it should be, rather, a public scrutiny of the pastor's faith and conduct, instituted (another masterly touch) in order to the vindication of these against certain current aspersions. A series of questions should be propounded to Mr. Jakes, *coram populo*, by answering which he might clear his skirts. That was the style in which the squire had it worded, in the notice of the public scrutiny, which all the world was bidden to attend; but all the while his expectation was that there would be no vindication, that Mr. Jakes would be utterly overwhelmed, anything less would smack of defeat for the prosecutor. Indeed, so confident was Thornhill that as the time drew on his chief fear was lest the culprit be frightened and run away, thus to take the wind out of the prosecutor's sails at a stroke.

Such fear was groundless, however. Mr. Jakes chose to stay and face the music.

He was given due notice of the public scrutiny and

of the questions which were to be propounded to him on that occasion. He wasn't much affected. He spoke to nobody about the business, not even to Dr. Robert, who knew nothing of it till it was all over. Afterwards, when the circumstances were discussed minutely, it occurred to some that there had been a shade of listlessness about Mr. Jakes, toward the last, as if he were tired and had given up caring much,—and still he came and went as usual. He preached his sermon every Sunday, and during the week he busied himself in the old way. He went over and hoed the widow's garden again, for it was June, and the weeds were not to be conquered with once putting down. He worked out with the farmers, as the chance offered, and it offered to him as often as anyone, because he had the name of being faithful and efficient help. And all the while he was characteristically odd,—kept people talking right up to the end. A farmer who had ten acres of clover lying in the swath came in a great pickle and offered Mr. Jakes \$2 a day and *found*, yet what did Mr. Jakes do but go instead with another farmer who had lain sick in bed all the spring and could pay him nothing?

CHAPTER XIII.

OUT OF THIS BODY OF DEATH

AFTON waited for no second bidding,—unlike the king in the parable the squire hadn't to send into the byways and hedges to find those who would attend upon his feast. He had dextrously played with the curiosity of his neighbors,—nobody but the inner few knew precisely what the charges were, but everybody was permitted to understand that they might cover a wide latitude. For aught the general public were informed, the Troy affair and the Torrelson affair, to speak of no lesser affairs, were to be brought up and aired,—Afton would be on the safe side, anyway, and so there was a great crowd, a feverishly expectant crowd. The church didn't hold the half of all who came. They pressed up about the windows from the outside,—they gathered on the roof of the horse-shed until it sagged, though from that point they could see little and hear nothing.

Down in front, the pulpit and organ had been pushed back into a corner, and a table set out, with a chair at either side of it. Beyond the table, against the wall, were five more chairs, facing the congregation. Afton came early, and sat and stood about, staring at these things, for the better part of an hour.

Sharp on the stroke of eight (it had clearly appeared, from the start, that more people would come if

the scrutiny were held in the evening), the door of the study opened and the squire came out, side by side with Mr. Jakes, and followed by five trustees of the church. They made a stir and there was more to it than the mere breaking up of a suspense long accumulating,—the spectacle of prosecutor and prosecuted walking together was too suggestive of fine Christian sentiment not to go to Afton's heart especially.

The five trustees mounted to the five chairs and sat down, forming a sort of neutral background to the picture, while the squire took his place at one side of the table and Mr. Jakes at the other. Of all the people there Mr. Jakes seemed least interested in the proceedings,—after it was over most everybody could recall having had the impression that the respondent didn't care much whether school kept or not. But the squire was full of importance,—no indifference in his bearing as he solemnly busied himself among the books with which the table was loaded.

After an interval of profound silence, the chairman of the trustees, in the middle place, asked Mr. Jakes to invoke the divine blessing. That was a fine Christian touch, too,—or the chairman's part in it was, at least. Mr. Jakes didn't distinguish himself. He hesitated, rose with visible reluctance and mumbled the Lord's prayer. Surely something more was due the occasion and the presence.

The chairman stood up and spoke a piece,—nobody could doubt it was a piece, from the sound of it.

"We are here," said he, "to perform a duty, delicate, perhaps, but a duty none the less. Certain doubts having been expressed as to the faith and conduct of the pastor of this church"—bowing to Mr.

Jakes—"the society have no alternative in justice but to afford him the opportunity of a public vindication. To this end certain inquiries have been framed and these will now be propounded to the respondent. Mr. Thornhill"—bowing to the squire—"has the floor."

The prosecutor took plenty of time to adjust his glasses and clear his throat.

"Mr. Jakes," he said, when he had made due obeisance to the chairman and his sanhedrim, "you have been notified of the questions which it is proposed to ask you. Shall I put them *seriatim* or *en bloc*?"

Not one person in twenty knew what the squire meant, but the feeling was universal that he had scored. Every eye was turned on the respondent. Mr. Jakes moved slightly, in his chair, but made no reply. Some imagined they saw a faint smile hover about his lips, but that might easily have been an illusion of the light.

The prosecutor waited a little and went on, ponderously: "Very well. Since you signify no choice, I will ask them *seriatim*."

He stopped to open two or three books and lay them out to the right and left of him,—nothing could be more fatal to the desired effect than any the least hurry.

"Firstly," he said, when all was ready to his satisfaction, "what is your belief as to the divinity of Christ?"

"I have none," replied Mr. Jakes, pretty languidly, and without rising.

Afton was unschooled in the niceties of theology, but it sufficiently understood that an extraordinary and unexpected rejoinder had been elicited—its jaw

dropped. In the midst of a great hush the squire put his secondly:

“What is your belief as to the inerrancy of the Scriptures?”

Once more the extraordinary reply,—Mr. Jakes had no belief on that head either.

“Do you hold it literally possible that water was changed into wine and that the dead were raised to life?” asked the squire, with the air of pinning his man down.

“It’s of no consequence one way or the other,” answered Mr. Jakes, refusing to be pinned.

The prosecutor had more business with his books, until a suitable time had elapsed, whereupon he proceeded to his thirdly, raising his voice some, in its honor:

“Thirdly, sir, what is your belief as to the subliminal self, and its effect on human responsibility?”

“I never heard of the subliminal self until I read your question. I don’t know what you mean by it,” quoth Mr. Jakes.

“I mean,” and here the squire sank to an awesome whisper, “the subconscious self.”

“I don’t know what that means, either, but I dare say it is equally something which doesn’t matter.”

Still the precise significance of all these replies was lost on the multitude, yet still there was no getting away from the impression that they were very extraordinary indeed, and very unexpected. Nor was it possible to doubt that the squire was baffled and disturbed. Anybody could see that the respondent was making no issue, that the prosecutor was being put to none of the vast resources which he had so cleverly marshaled. Not a book, for instance, had he found

occasion to appeal to, and there was only one question left.

The squire and the sanhedrim had canvassed the possibility of an adjournment being necessary, for lack of time to dispose of all the inquiries in one evening,—they were prepared to adjourn if the occasion should demand. At shortest the squire hadn't thought of culminating in his "finally" much before midnight, and here he was about to culminate before half past eight. It was disconcerting, but there was nothing else:

"Finally, sir, what is your belief as to the atonement?"

It straightway appeared that Mr. Jakes had a belief on that head,—at anyrate he stood up and the squire sat down. Issue was to be joined, after all? People asked themselves that, and looked at Mr. Jakes, and what they beheld caused them to forget all about issues and scrutinies,—his aspect was so unfamiliar. There was particularly his fashion of lifting up his eyes, not to confront the world and his accusers, but rather to ignore them, as if there were for him no world and no accusers,—and there was more; certainly Mr. Jakes wasn't himself. And his discourse, who ever heard so disjointed and senseless a speech from him?

A string of jerky phrases, that was all:

"Jesus—for men—atonement for all—beasts on Jewish altars slain—no, not that—the death he died—death on the cross—complete—

"The Good Samaritan—

"To follow—the cross—

"Atonement—at one—the will of God in their hearts—good will—God's will—

“ Nobody understands—nobody—

“ The Jews—blood of beasts—blood of Jesus—

“ Religion—the process—

“ Nobody—”

His voice was no clarion blast to begin with, and it weakened and was more and more gaspy as he went on. Even within the church not all could hear him. Outside someone had called out, “ Louder ! ” and another, “ Speak up, parson ! ” But he was done speaking. He was seen to sway back against his chair, —it slipped away from him, but he reached out, gropingly, and caught the arm. Steadying himself by that he sank down, quietly, but he missed the seat and went to the floor. For a moment he held a sitting posture there, and then, with a scarcely audible moan, he toppled over, prostrate and perfectly still.

The squire and the sanhedrim sprang to him, all kindness and solicitude. The congregation, after a brief period of stupor, broke into excited uproar. Suppressed screams told of a terror in here and there a timid heart, and back by the door there was a surging to get out, as if there was danger to flee from. The feeling lay on all, no doubt, that a very dread presence had come among them.

The assemblage was fully half women. Two of these singled themselves out.

One was Mrs. Troy. She was the first to reach Mr. Jakes. Before anybody else could think of doing anything, she was kneeling beside him, chafing his hands and forehead, and fanning him. She was entirely collected, however. She directed that he be removed at once to her house, and she sent her husband to fetch a conveyance.

The other woman was Nannie Jones, and she was

distracted. She knelt likewise, but only to caress the senseless man and beseech him to look at her. When Mrs. Troy spoke, in her calm, collected way, Nannie flew into a great passion.

"You dirty drab!" she shrieked, and would have assailed her rival with blows, only that her father and mother came and took her away.

They put Mr. Jakes to bed and pretty soon he opened his eyes. He was perfectly clear in his mind, for the moment, and asked that Dr. Robert be brought.

"For fear I shall not be here to meet him," he said, "I will give you a message for him."

His message was this:

"Tell the good Dr. Robert, for me, that though the Christian Church is indeed a dead corpse, she is not more dead than Lazarus was. The touch of her Master will yet restore her to life."

Those were his last words. Right away he lapsed easily back into unconsciousness and woke no more. His life went out with the night.

Dr. Robert came and saw him buried, in the tangled little cemetery at Afton. There was a gallant funeral, for now people thought only of the sweetness and goodness of Mr. Jakes. There were flowers, for it was the time of flowers, and genuine tears were not lacking.

When all was done, the doctor drove home alone, and made his last final entry in the diary.

It was in these words:

"Him also have they crucified."

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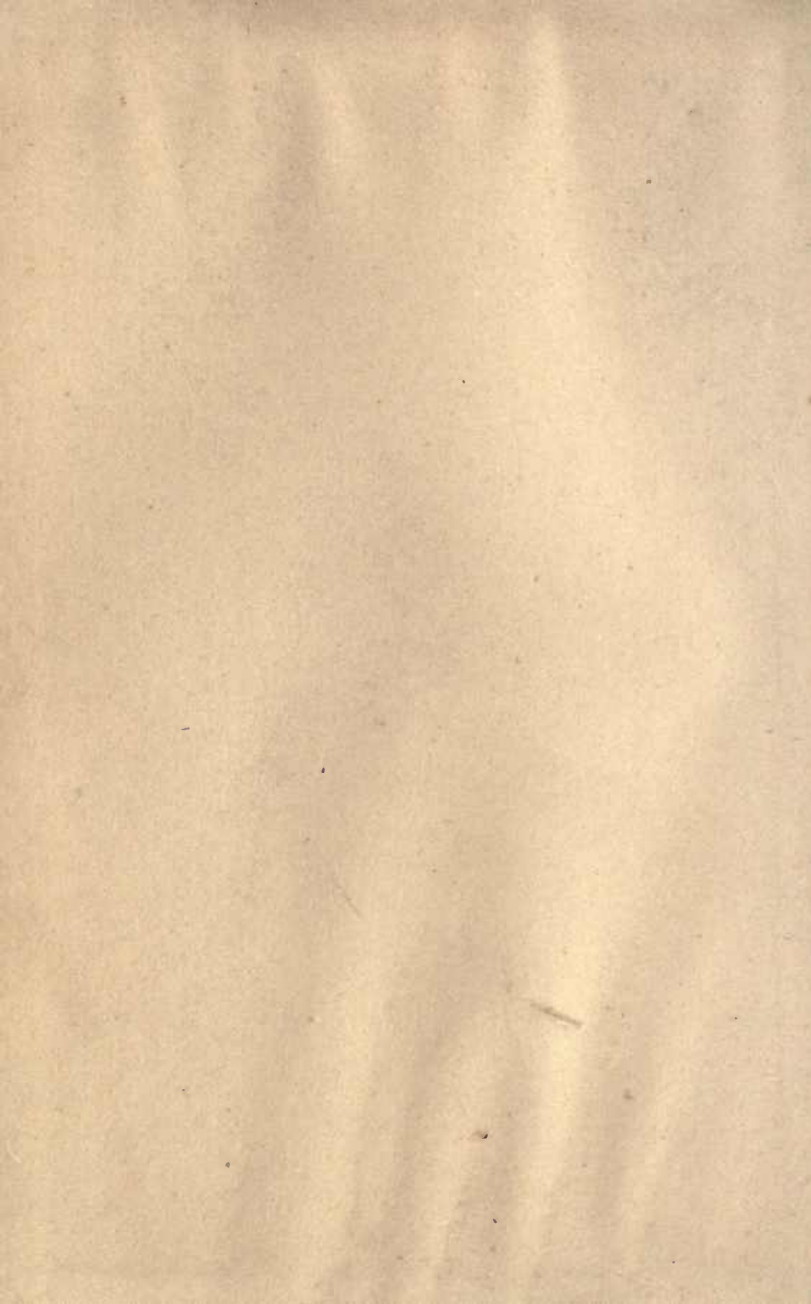
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